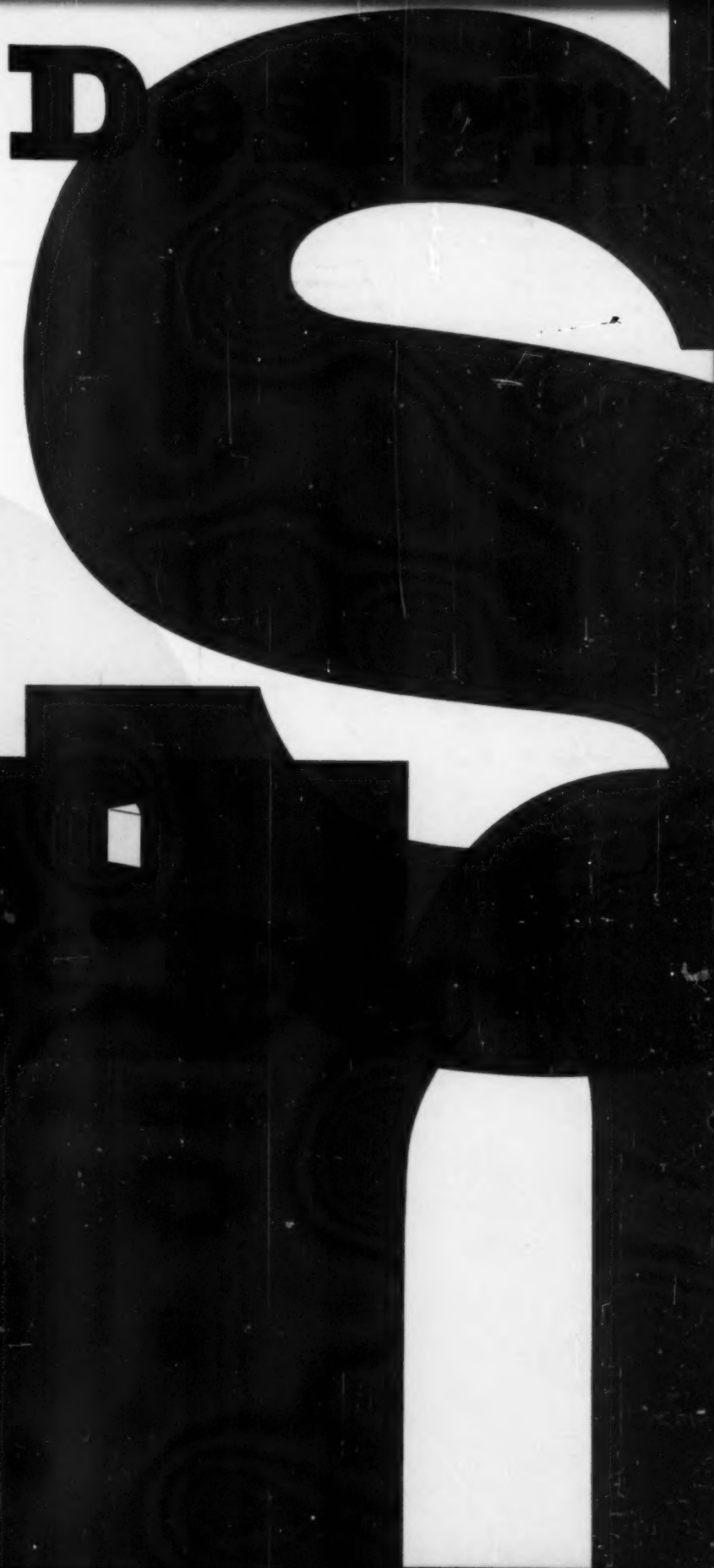


The Council of Industrial Design

December 1959 No 132 Price 3s



ERNEST HOCH

ANCESTORS OF AN INDUSTRY

JOSEPH BLACK published, in 1756, an account of his "Experiments upon Magnesium Alba, Quicklime and some other Alkaline Substances". Black knew that limestone and the mild alkalis effervesce when treated with dilute acids. He assumed that the gas evolved was carbon dioxide, and proved this by experiments which showed that no gas is evolved if an acid is added to quicklime, that limestone saturates nearly the same quantity of acid after conversion to quicklime as before, and yields the same weight of gas when treated with dilute acid as when heated strongly in a furnace. Black showed that if a definite weight of limestone is converted to quicklime, the quicklime can be reconverted to limestone by treatment with a mild alkali solution, and the weight of the limestone so formed is equal to that of the original specimen. From his experiments Black was able to explain that limestone is a compound of quicklime and carbon dioxide, and that mild alkalis are compounds of fixed air with substances resembling quicklime but much more water-soluble. When a mild alkali solution is treated with quicklime, the latter absorbs the carbon dioxide of the former, with the production of insoluble limestone.

In all essentials, Black's explanation coincides with that of our own day, and his paper is regarded as one of the classics of chemical literature.



The same curiosity
that inspired the
ancestors of their
industry leads
I.C.I.'s scientists
and technologists
towards the discovery
and development
of new materials
and improved processes.



Charles Richard



hille
CONTRACT DIVISION

HANDSOME IS, HANDSOME DOES—with his new Status Group, Robin Day introduces a truly protean modernity. At remarkably low prices, considering the materials and workmanship employed. Several basic broad desk tops, pedestals, panels, tables and storage cabinets; practically infinite permutations, to match any space and function—for example L-shaped arrangements, for compact convenience. Mahogany, pacific walnut, teak or rosewood veneers, working tops timbered or grey melamine, hardwood lipped. Square-section steel frames and legs, matt black or satin chrome. Many harmonious Hille chairs. Visit our showrooms, 39/40 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, Hyde Park 9576, or 24 Albert Street, Birmingham 4, Midland 7378, or write for brochure.

Internationally-honoured furniture for homes and offices

Winsor & Newton's series

sable brushes



**no finer
brush
on earth**



Each brush is produced from only the first choice of pure red sable hair taken exclusively from the finest tails amongst the thousands which we use in our two brush factories. Here the hair is cleaned, dressed and matured by our own exclusive methods, and blending and doming are performed entirely by hand by the most expert of our craftsmen. Whether it is a No. 00 at 2/3d. or a No. 12 at £3.10s.0d., each brush is a masterpiece of craft in the service of art.

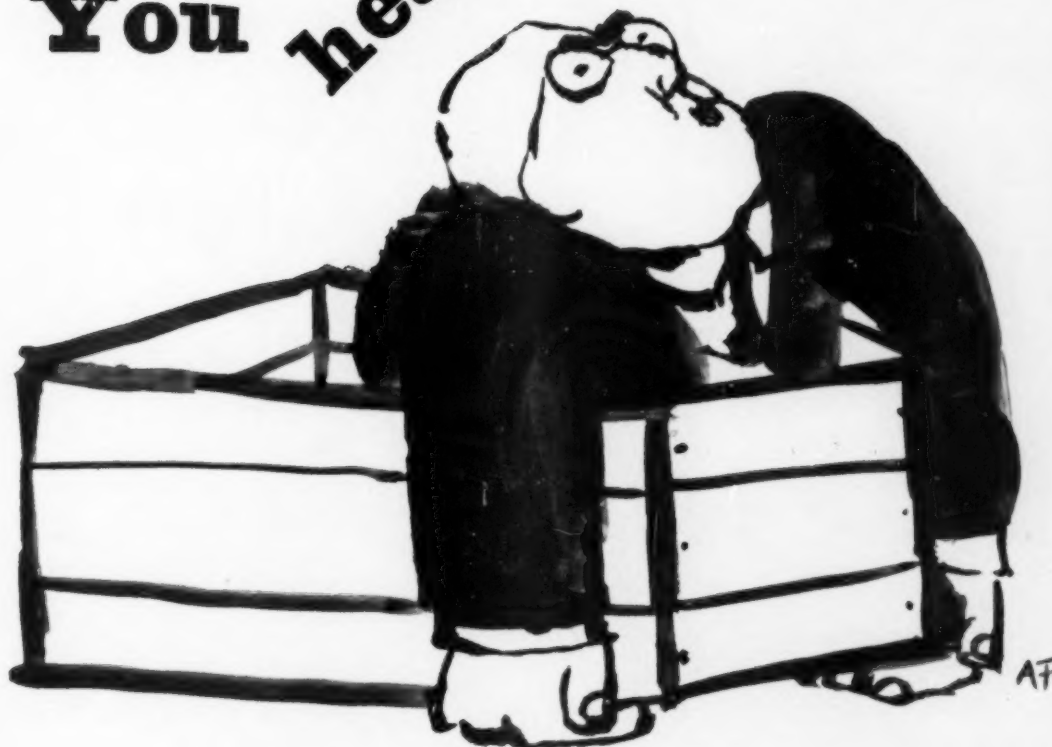


Winsor & Newton

Winsor & Newton Ltd., Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex.

Also at New York and Sydney.

You heave ho!



Q: *What do with drunken sailor?*

Simple! Scuppers. Hose-pipe on him. Long boat till sober. Never fails.

Q: *What do with sand, gravel, rock, rubbish, ready-mixed concrete, aggregate, ballast, tarmac, clinkers, coal, cobblestones, beach boulders, etc. etc.? How carry? How unload? No answer? . . . Come, now.*

Know answer! Telehoist tippers. Trucks long, short, trucks squat, lorries, dumpers, transporters, all fitted Telehoist tipping gear. Full marks.

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Telehoist tipping teleequipment. Telelevers. Teleloaders. Highly teleefficient. Sturdily teletechnical. Links . . . Scow ends . . . Telescopic rams (think of that!) . . .

Telehoist Limited one of the Wilmot Breeden companies? Correct. How did you guess?

A limited number of booklets containing advertisements in this series is available.
Write to Advertising Dept., Wilmot Breeden, Oxford Street, Birmingham 5.

WILMOT BREEDEN are at Birmingham:

also at London, Manchester, Bridgwater, Glasgow, Melbourne, Toronto.



Opal 'Perspex' display stand specially designed by R. Stennett-Willson for J. Wuidart & Co. Ltd., London

Opal 'Perspex' was chosen to display modern glass

TO DISPLAY modern, fine glass so that its background enhances the colour and form without intruding is a very difficult task. R. Stennett-Willson of J. Wuidart & Co. Ltd. chose opal 'Perspex' acrylic sheet to enclose the light source so that the display stands would give an even diffuse light which would show clearly the shape and colour of the glassware without distracting highlights and reflections.

The stand is simple, clean in line and displays the glass to advantage because the opal 'Perspex' contrasts with the glass but remains a background.

'Perspex' acrylic sheet is available in a range of attractive modern colours in opal, transparent, translucent and opaque colours as well as in clear sheet. It is tough, light in weight and easy to clean and maintain.



PERSPEX

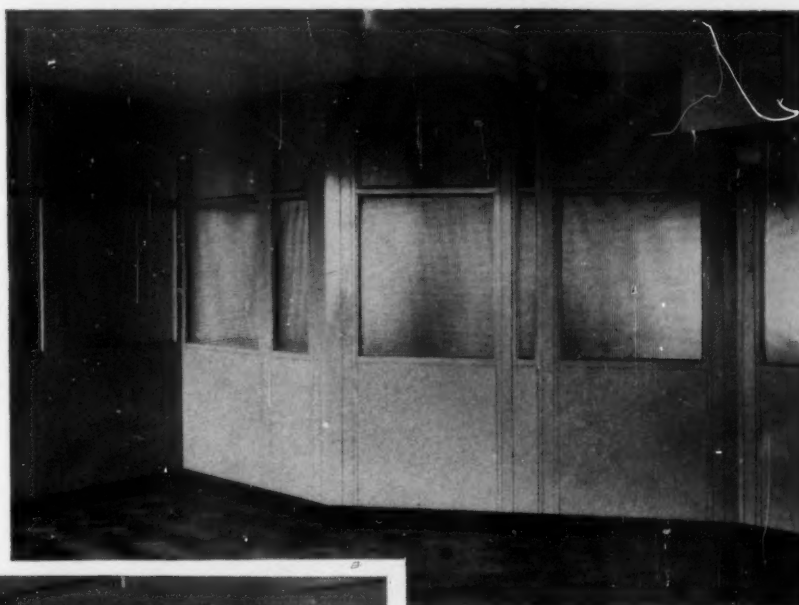
'Perspex' is the registered trade mark for the acrylic sheet manufactured by I.C.I.

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED · LONDON S.W.1

P.705



**SPEEDY,
RIGID,
DEMOUNTABLE
and adjustable
to any layout**



Photographs show an installation in the offices of Lloyd's Register of Shipping, Norfolk House, Croydon.



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Steel office furniture can also be supplied: DESKS • DESKING • TABLES • CABINETS • BOOKCASES • CUPBOARDS • WARDROBES • ETC.
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SF 31



The
Royalite
field of
applications
is continually
expanding

Here are some
recent additions . . .

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MATERIAL HANDLING**

Boxes
Trays
Holders
Precision containers
Displays

CASINGS & HOUSINGS

Instrument cases
Partitioned boxes
Equipment cases
Housings for precision
equipment
Office equipment casings

LUGGAGE

Business luggage
Lightweight luggage

ELECTRICAL

High line protectors
Control panels
Electrical housings
Radio outer casings

MISCELLANEOUS

Air-conditioners
Knife boxes
Food trays

Designers! Manufacturers! Retailers!
Do you know that



Royalite
NITRILE THERMOPLASTIC SHEET

IS NOW AVAILABLE IN BULK (*smooth or grained*)

**No more restrictions, no more holding back—
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For the first time in two years, there's Royalite in plenty. Now designers can insist on Royalite for their designs, manufacturers can go ahead and make in Royalite, while retailers can look forward to buying articles to sell to customers who want things to be made from Royalite—the most tested, colourful, versatile and economical plastic material of them all.

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**Here's one of a thousand everyday
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A food tray must be odourless. It must not absorb foreign odours, and it must be capable of withstanding varying temperatures. These are some of the reasons why U.S. Royalite was particularly chosen for this application. Others are its exceptional light weight—about 40% that of aluminium—its resistance to impacts, cuts and abrasions, and its amazingly low production cost.

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Rigidal

FOR SELF-SUPPORTING ARCHED ROOFS

The BRITISH ALUMINIUM Company Limited



NORFOLK HOUSE ST JAMES'S SQUARE LONDON SW1



Designers! Manufacturers! Retailers!
Do you know that



Royalite
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IS NOW AVAILABLE IN BULK (smooth or grained)

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 expanding

*Here are some
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**PACKAGING &
 MATERIAL HANDLING**

Boxes
 Trays
 Holders
 Precision containers
 Displays

CASINGS & HOUSINGS

Instrument cases
 Partitioned boxes
 Equipment cases
 Housings for precision
 equipment
 Office equipment casings

LUGGAGE

Business luggage
 Lightweight luggage

ELECTRICAL

High line protectors
 Control panels
 Electrical housings
 Radio outer casings

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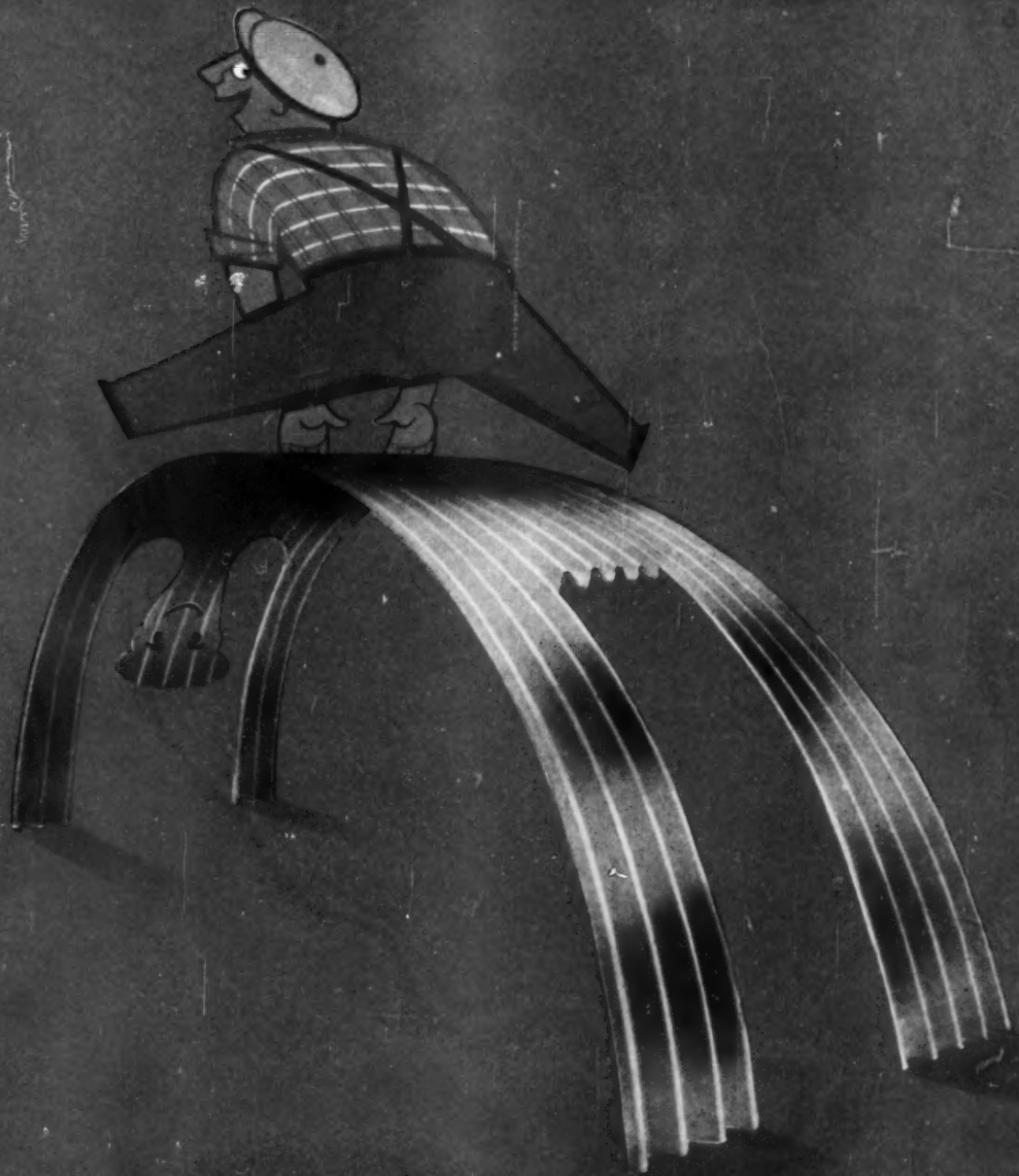
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With the background of experience gained in Stainless Steel production over more than a quarter of a century, our Foundries, using modern production processes and supported by competent Research and Technical Staffs, are able to supply castings of infinite variety for high duty application.

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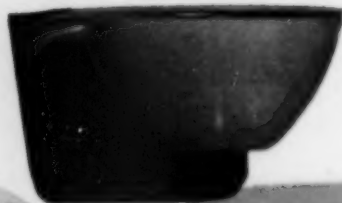
is the only company in Europe to devote its activities exclusively to the production and development of stainless and heat-resisting steels.



The desk featured here is Model 7084/3
a recent addition to the Abbess Pre-eminent Series of
executive office furniture. The chair is model 6808 in the
Abbess Seating Range.



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two colour process



With the background of experience gained in Stainless Steel production over more than a quarter of a century, our Foundries, using modern production processes and supported by competent Research and Technical Staffs, are able to supply castings of infinite variety for high duty application.



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is the only company in Europe to devote its activities exclusively to the production and development of stainless and heat-resisting steels.



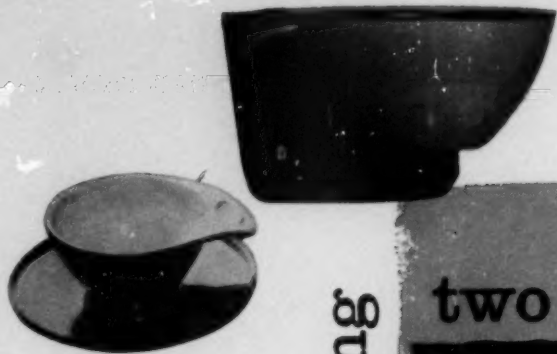
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two colour process





The desk featured here is Model 70, a recent addition to the Abbess Pre-
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 Abbess Seating Range.



designed for stacking

two colour process



FIESTA
melamine



Brookes & Adams

EIGHTEEN EDMUND STREET BIRMINGHAM 3



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Ask for details of the full SPECTRUM range
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CONTOUR low back,
metal frame

CONTOUR range of upholstered chairs designed for public places and offices, take up little floor space, are strong, graceful and very comfortable.

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CONTOUR adjustable, high back, wooden frame

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'Monotype' Spectrum

Series 356 was cut by The Monotype Corporation Ltd
in collaboration with Joh. Enschedé en Zonen of Haarlem.

It was originally designed in 1941 for a range of Bibles
to be published by Het Spectrum of Utrecht,
and although this project had to be abandoned
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by the late Jan van Krimpen

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and that it retains its clean look of elegance
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is a timeless classic design of

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A sixteen-page prospectus of this face,
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in
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EASILY

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or p.v.c.
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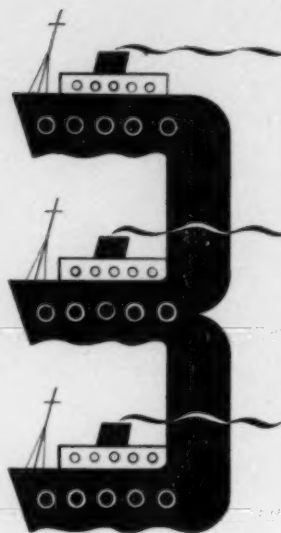
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TGA P1

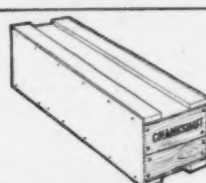
THE BOARD WE CAN TAILOR TO SUIT YOU EXACTLY



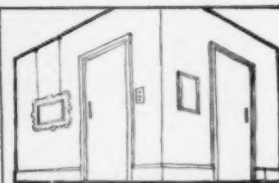
As well as being bent, blanked, and cut to almost any size, Bowater Board can be dressed up in all sorts of attractive colours and textures. For reasonably long runs, it can be given special hardening, softening, or other treatments to make it suitable for jobs like the ones shown here...



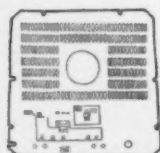
For British Railways carriage partitions, Bowater Board was specially treated for easier lamination of Melamine.



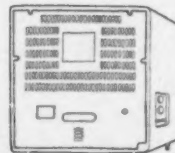
A specially softened board was produced for these crankshaft boxes, so that automatic nailing machines could be used.



By contrast, a specially stiffened Bowater Board was used for making these flush doors.



Another regular use—TV backs. Bowater Board is dark-stained so that overprinted circuit diagrams are clearly legible.



TV backs again: this time, Bowater Board was fine-meshed on the reverse side so it could take screening foil.



Another British Railways assignment: Bowater Board was specially adapted to make it easier to curve and shape railway coach ceilings.



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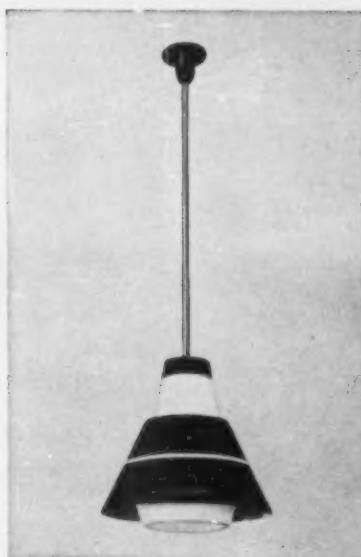
Bowater Board

BUILDING BOARDS DIVISION, BOWATERS SALES COMPANY LIMITED,
BOWATER HOUSE, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON SW1. TEL: KNI 7070

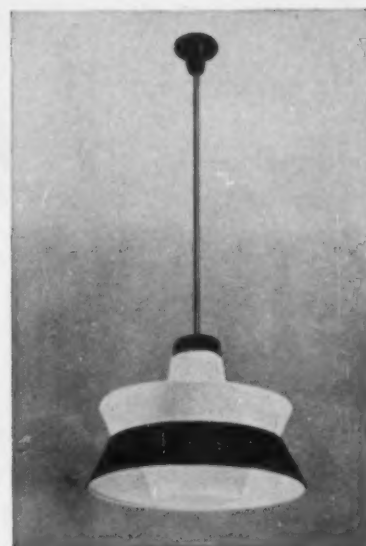
CRC 64B I



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FALKS

MODERN FITTINGS

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Designed by J. M. Barnicot MSIA of Falks



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EXTRUDED PLASTICS



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**FORMICA is a registered trade mark*

Number 132
December 1959

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25 Sir Gordon Russell

27 Pointers

28 Roots and branches Nikolaus Pevsner

Sir Gordon Russell retires from the directorship of the CoID at the end of this month. This article by Professor Pevsner, the distinguished art historian and design critic, describes Sir Gordon's career to date which has led him to achieve an international status as an authority on industrial design

36 Graphic design 4 Herbert Spencer

The design of British booklets, folders and leaflets is at last improving; even some technical literature is now clearly and intelligently presented

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Sir Gordon Russell


No organisation can have been more fortunate in its leader, no staff more privileged or happy in its chief, than has been the Council of Industrial Design over the last 12 years.

Sir Gordon Russell, who retires at the end of the month, came to the directorship of the Council at a critical time for that post-war fledgling. Its first director, S. C. Leslie, had with great energy and enthusiasm, put the Council on the map by staging in its second year the ambitious *Britain Can Make It* Exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum; but that bold essay was not without its repercussions. Many industries were at that time unaware of the meaning of design. Many were suspicious of the Council's intentions and scornful of its authority. Most, in those days of easy selling, were content with things as they were and saw no reason for an official or officious body to tell them what they should do. Some reacted strongly against the idea that an independent but publicly financed council should presume to select or reject for public exhibition things made by competing but competent manufacturers. To others it all seemed to be an unwarrantable interference in the normal workings of commercial enterprise. The very success of that first exhibition threatened the continued existence of its sponsors. Had a lesser man than Gordon Russell succeeded to the directorship, the whole experiment might have been quietly shelved.

But Gordon Russell had just the qualities and qualifications that the situation demanded. He was himself a successful manufacturer who had proved that, given perseverance and conviction, good design can be good business. He was also a craftsman and designer with an international reputation whose place in history was already secure. He had had experience in retailing his own products and knew both the power and the problems of the distributor. As a hotel keeper he knew how scarce were things of good quality and design but also how potent could be the influence of the bulk purchaser. As a private individual he had spent many years writing and preaching the common-sense of good design and was convinced that public demand for better things was greater than the commercial world credited. But his own commonsense told him that the pace should not be forced; bridges must first be built with industry. Because he accepted from the outset that design starts in the factory, in the centres of industrial production, not in the windows and showrooms of the metropolis, he seized every opportunity to meet manufacturers on their own ground and to meet them half way if need be; head-on collisions might make headlines, but only at the expense of headway.

Those who have served under him for 10 or more years know how great that headway has been and how much it has owed to Gordon Russell's wisdom, patience, tact, tenacity and courage. It took a great deal of nerve to stick to the guns in those early days of the Council. The success of its work today, symbolised by The Design Centre, is as much a monument to Sir Gordon Russell's courage as to his other great qualities.

P.R.



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Staines glass

With real traffic problems popping up all over the country it is difficult for anyone to work up much enthusiasm for Utopian road schemes like the one put forward recently by the Glass Age Development Committee. This is a pity. The committee, as you may know, is sponsored by Pilkingtons and the projects it produces are much more than publicity gimmicks. They are imaginative schemes, planned by distinguished architects and engineers – and the only thing that brands them as head-in-cloud stuff is lack of money. Yet the cost of 'Motopia' – a thousand-acre housing scheme with rooftop roads – would be about that of the L.C.C.'s Roehampton estate. Some 30,000 people could live here (on a site just west of Staines reservoir) with no fear that the children among them would join the 60,000 injured on the roads every year. If there are snags in this scheme I have yet to find someone who knows them. It is not only a solution to the problem of traffic dangers; it is a way of avoiding the monotony of ordinary street planning. Because the roads are constructed on a grid system the buildings they traverse form large squares of open space, and these are cleverly landscaped. The result would be very different from the boring sprawl of most of the New Towns. If anyone would care to try the scheme they might like to know that although the cost would be £60 million, an annual rent of £100 a bedroom would bring in seven per cent.

Koert treatment

If John van Koert ever comes to Britain again – and I can't believe he has been in this country for more than a day – I hope he will visit The Design Centre. He won't find it anything like the place he's been describing to audiences in the Chicago area. Still, these audiences must have found it all very amusing. The British Government, they were told, wants the working and middle classes to spend their enormous earnings on escaping from "quaint and cosy squalor". And The Design Centre, they heard, is determined to spare the average man from "copying the stuffy and wasteful gentility of the old and middle and upper classes". How does the Centre do this? By showing "approximations of sound Danish furniture, Swedish steel and Italian glass".

Well, that's an interesting picture; and even if it does suggest that Mr van Koert talks before he has assembled his facts, it shows that he is not entirely unobservant. There is a similarity between consumer goods designed in Britain and those made in other parts of the world. You can't have similar mass production techniques

without getting similar results. It would be very surprising if you didn't. What is surprising is that so many products do retain their national characteristics. If Mr van Koert cares to look round The Design Centre one day, he will find many examples of designs which have developed from traditional shapes and patterns.

I wish I knew what was really bothering Mr van Koert. I've read his remarks several times, and I can only assume he is a sick man – sick of the whole subject of design. He likes to see the evangelical gleam in the eyes of designers in backward countries, yet he himself finds "shiny, old maroon brocade" a relief from "so much good sense", and sounds irritable when he says The Design Centre is "budging British manufacturers out of their ingrained habits". Although he and his fellow countrymen are tired of the mass produced look, he quite understands – in his patronising way – that other countries are excited to be discovering it for the first time. As for America herself, he isn't altogether bothered about what he calls "the conflict of trends" (a lovely phrase!) because this is a period of "growing romanticism". The increasing interest in period styles and alien cultures is "an actual measurable condition". America is wanting "relief from predictability . . ." But I won't go on: though you should perhaps know (if you can't be bothered to read extracts from his talk on page 61) that Mr van Koert finally untangles himself enough to admit that there *are* "thoughtfully produced designs" in Europe.

Hearts and flowers

Before we leave America let me pass on the wise words of architect Edward D. Stone. If you find you don't have enough ideas in an eight-hour day, he says, you should look into the eyes of the woman you love, go to Chartres and see the sunrise through the stained glass or sit among the flowers in your garden. Mr Stone was talking to the Institute of Decorators, so the growth of romanticism ought to get a useful shot in the roots.

Wheeled suburbs

One of America's big problems, the wheeled suburbs, is a growing problem here – as we were reminded recently by the public interest in the first *Caravan Exhibition* at Earl's Court. Although many of these caravans were intelligently planned, and quite a lesson to small-house designers, the furniture and fittings were as ghastly as ever. I didn't see anything resembling the better American examples. The big laugh of the display, as *Punch* pointed out, was "the most modern conception of the mobile home of the future" with its warning that any person moving the vehicle is liable to a fine not exceeding £20. This, of course, is just an admission of the fact that caravans are now regarded as units that make up a suburb on immovable wheels. These suburbs are beginning to get as much out of hand as the traffic. I wonder how long it will be before they are recognised as a cunning means of providing sub-standard housing (slum is a better word) for people who simply can't be bothered to take on the responsibilities of an ordinary house.

KENNETH J. ROBINSON

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

The story of Sir Gordon Russell's development of industrial design

told by a friend and critic who has known him for more than 20 years

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

People read biographies, because they want to know about men whose work has changed the world or a small corner of it, because they want to know what kind of men they were, and because very occasionally the life of a man may reveal itself as a pattern as consistent and satisfying as any in fiction. If this is what attracts you in biographical writing, read on; for Sir Gordon Russell's story, from his earliest chipping-away, well-meaning and uninformed, at chunks of wood, to his directorship of the first and still the most highly esteemed national agency on all matters of industrial design is amazingly consistent, and will, I hope, prove to make satisfying reading as well.

The story starts with Sir Gordon's father S. B. Russell buying the Lygon Arms at Broadway 55 years ago, when Sir Gordon was 12. He was not a hotelier; he had been branch-manager of a bank and then employed by a big brewery to visit and perhaps buy in pubs. But the Lygon Arms struck S. B. Russell as something special. He was far-seeing enough to recognise that the motor car would give country hotels a new lease of life, and in his vision the neglected Lygon Arms seemed to make an ideal country hotel. When his brewery would not see his point he bought it himself and gradually made it into what it is now. In the course of the first 10 years two enlargements were put in hand, and furnishing went on all the time. S. B. Russell loved old furniture and bought locally for the inn what he could. But things were not always in the best state of preservation, and so a repair shop – a most elementary looking affair – was installed at the back. It was run by Jim Turner, and his sons were working in it as well. One of them, Edgar Turner, is still going strong. The workshop soon repaired for outside customers as well, and in 1906 already a separate business in antiques was started which soon sold to Americans as well as county people.

Young Gordon meanwhile went to the Chipping Campden Grammar School. He left in 1908 and became his father's secretary; it was a strenuous life, but he found time to stuff and cover a leather chair and to write by hand four books on paper and vellum. He cannot have done badly; for he was complimented by Robert Bridges and Douglas Cockerell. No wonder then that he took a special interest in the repair shop. There are still as *incunabula* of Gordon Russell furniture at the Lygon Arms some beds and towel rails which he designed about 1910 and which are solid, rustic and uncouth. They would hardly have received compliments

from the masters of English cabinet-designing and making in the so-called Arts and Crafts style who lived and worked during those years in the Cotswolds not far from Broadway: Ernest Gimson and the Barnsley Brothers.

When the war came the Lygon Arms was flourishing and the workshop employed 10 men. Gordon Russell went into the army at once and served for three years on the Somme and around Ypres, first in the ranks, then as an officer. He had his full share of comradeship, horror and mud and was finally wounded, healed, decorated and demobilised.

S. B. Russell, as soon as peace had returned, took his two elder sons, Gordon and Don into partnership. Don gradually took over the Lygon Arms, Gordon concentrated more and more on the making and selling of furniture. In 1920 a Georgian farmhouse close to the Lygon Arms was bought as a showroom, and here as the most interesting acquisition of the year Miss Toni Vere Denning appeared, who was to become Mrs Gordon Russell the next year. This biographical sketch cannot take in Lady Russell as she would deserve, nor Sir Gordon's life first at Broadway and then soon at Kingcombe above Campden.

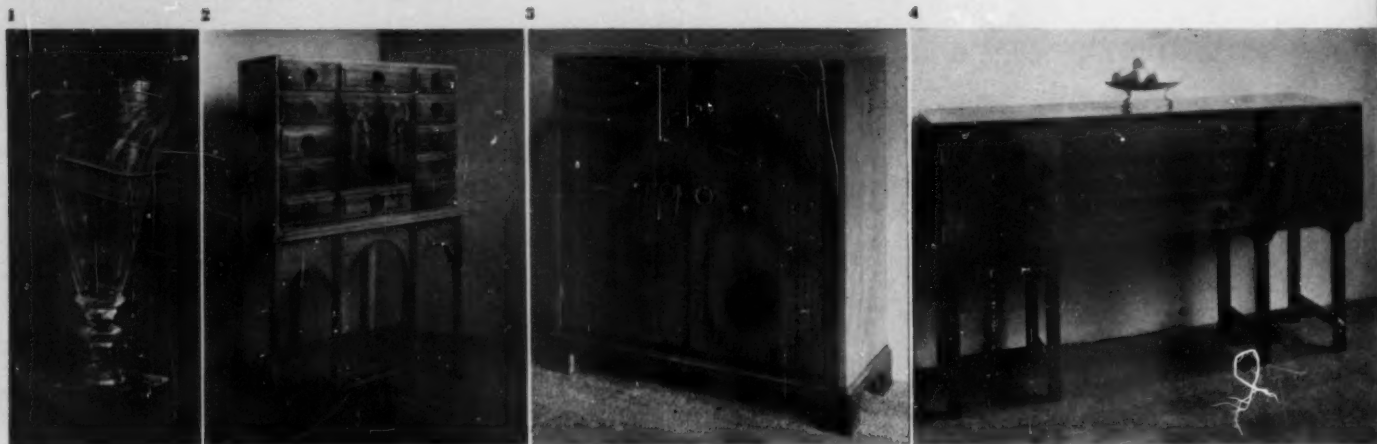
Gordon Russell was still under 30 when he got married. But the war had matured him, and he had come to realise that if the workshop at Broadway was capable of repairing the best pieces of old furniture to their own standards, it would be capable of making new furniture to the same standards. With this, Act Two of this story starts; for by new furniture he did not understand imitation period furniture, but pieces of the kind that were made by Gimson and the Barnsleys and that he had now learned to appreciate and admire. So he started to design in that spirit, showed what he intended to do to John Gloag, then assistant editor of *The Cabinetmaker*, and Percy A. Wells, head of the cabinet-making department of the Shoreditch Technical Institute, and was encouraged by both. Mr Gloag illustrated pieces made by Gordon Russell's from 1923 onwards, and Percy Wells who visited Broadway quite frequently, suggested that Edgar Turner should go through a brief period of training in fine cabinet-making in London and placed one of his Shoreditch boys as an improver with Gordon Russell's, one W. H. Russell (no relative) who in the end became the head designer of the firm – as he happily still is.

The development of Gordon Russell's enterprise left

Sir Gordon Russell inspects work from a double-ended tenoner, one of the latest additions to the factory of Gordon Russell Ltd, which he founded 50 years ago. He is deeply interested in the capabilities of machines and was one of the first manufacturers to use them for the production of well designed furniture.

All photographs of Sir Gordon in this article are by Sam Lambert





1 The *Wrythen* pattern, one example from many pieces of glass designed by Gordon Russell (1909 - 14) for the Lygon Arms and for sale. His aim was to return to the sound English glass making tradition. MAKER *Stevens & Williams Ltd.* 2 A highlight of the phase (1924) when Gordon Russell was emulating the best of Ernest Gimson and the Barnsleys. Cab-

inet 157 in English walnut was shown at the Paris exhibition, 1925. 3 The first design by Gordon Russell to be flush-fronted (1925). This boot cupboard 365 was possibly the result of observing the work of both the Georgian cabinet makers and Sir Ambrose Heal. 4 Although this sideboard 383, designed by Gordon Russell (1925), carries on the new



Major contributions to the new style of 1930 were made by two designers working for Gordon Russell. 8 This coffee table 966 was designed by his brother R. D. Russell; 9, the *Shipton* bedroom, 889, etc., by W. H. Russell. Both are of 1930; 9, shows the firm's interest in supplying complete rooms

of relatively inexpensive pieces. 10, the *Woburn* dining room by R. D. Russell is also a complete room, but one of a choicer timber and more accomplished craftsmanship. It was designed in 1935, set the highest standard for English furniture at the time and was widely illustrated.

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

nothing to be desired, and old S. B. had every reason to congratulate himself on having given so much freedom to his son for following his puzzling bent. In 1922 the first pieces were exhibited locally at Cheltenham, in 1923 two firms were invited by the Department of Overseas Trade to exhibit complete rooms at an exhibition of the British Institute of Industrial Art in the Victoria & Albert Museum. One was Heal's, the other Gordon Russell's. In 1924 Gordon Russell's showed at Wembley, in 1925 an elaborate cabinet received a Gold Medal at the international exhibition in Paris, 2. Such a cabinet would take a craftsman six months to make and would sell then at something like £200.

Gordon Russell loved timbers and loved the delicacy and precision of workmanship, and so he must have

been satisfied with the success of his workshops. But a doubt crept into his mind as to whether the precious style of Gimson, the style of the Arts and Crafts, initiated in the work of William Morris, and developed to a summit of achievement in such pieces as the Gordon Russell cabinets of 1924 and 1925 was really the answer to the problem of how to design and make fine furniture in the twentieth century.

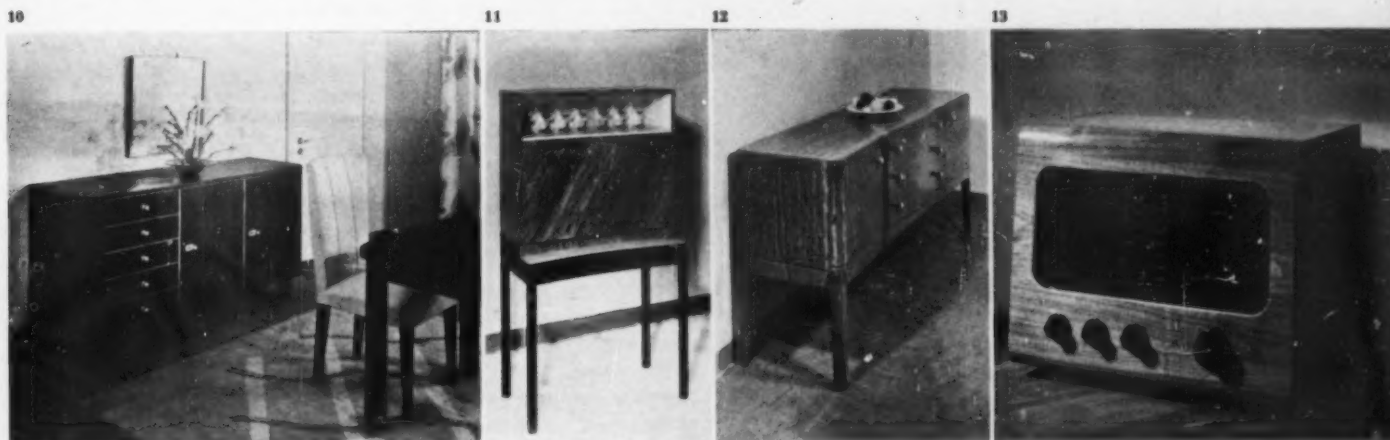
The Modern Movement

So in the course of the years 1926 - 30 a complete change of style took place, of style rather than of attitude; for even if Gordon Russell furniture of 1930 looked much less intricate, it was no less perfectly made. The change was one from frame and panel to flush con-



interest in modern shapes, it recalls the earlier, more ornamented phase. **5** The *Weston* chair *#17* from a group designed by Gordon Russell (1929) for production mainly by machine. **6** Unit bookcases *#13* by Gordon Russell. They are of 1930, the *annus mirabilis* in which he and his designers, **8** and **9**, broke clear of the Arts and Crafts tradition to establish

in England the international modern style for furniture. The unit principle is typical of the rational movement of the period. **7** The last of Gordon Russell's designs to be shown here, this desk *1080*, with black cellulosed top, and the chair *#17*, produced mainly by machine in 1934, show the style to be firmly established.



11, 12, 13 Beginning in 1938 the firm's designers anticipated the post-war trend towards more graceful shapes. **11** Drinks cabinet *1317*, with interior and flap lined in Roanoid, was designed by J. A. Wilson, in 1938. **12** The *Sudeley* sideboard *1260*, with bowed front was designed by W. H.

Russell in 1938. Work began on wireless cabinets in 1931. **13** One of the finest of the pre-war Murphy Radio cabinets made at Gordon Russell's Park Royal factory was designed by R. D. Russell and a consultant, Eden Minns, also in 1938.



14 A new range of mahogany office furniture designed by Professor R. D. Russell and introduced by Gordon Russell Ltd at the firm's exhibition *Fifty Years of Furniture Making 1909-1959* at the Ceylon Tea Centre, London, last September. *Left* *R803* £71 9s 6d; *centre* *R802* £38; *right* *R801* £27 3s 6d.

The many sides of Sir Gordon Russell

struction, from elaboration to simplicity, from individual pieces to set rooms made in batches of six, from jobs made for individual patrons to contract jobs, from designs all provided by Gordon Russell himself, to designs by others inside the firm as well. Among these others two stand out. R. D. Russell (now Professor Russell), Gordon Russell's much younger brother who was trained as an architect at the Architectural Association in London in 1924-27, and W. H. Russell whom we have already met. But the actual change was not only of Gordon Russell's own decision but also of his own designing. Two pieces of 1925 stand out as without precedent or preparation in the history of the firm: a boot cupboard, 3, and a sideboard, 4, both of mahogany. Pieces so entirely dependent on proportion and beauty of timber, pieces unmoulded and undecorated, while probably influenced by Sheraton and perhaps by Heal, were extremely rare in 1925, and pieces such as the rooms and individual chairs of 1930, the first unit bookcases, 6, the fireside chair, the circular table, 8, the Ship-ton bedroom, 9, and others were still among the most up-to-date, best designed and certainly best made in any European country.

Thus - internationally speaking - by 1930 Gordon Russell had recaptured for England a position in the forefront of furniture design which the country had lost as soon as the Arts and Crafts style had given way to a new revolutionary style of the twentieth century, and the curious and eminently English thing in all this was that Gordon Russell furniture while being revolutionary never looked revolutionary. Jazzy, modernistic, 'Paris-1925' trim hardly ever obtained access (the exceptions are a few odd pieces of 1929-30), and tubular steel was kept out of the business. On the other hand, when Gordon Russell in 1933 saw the first of Alvar Aalto's ingenious and inexpensive bent-plywood stools, etc, he took them into his showrooms without hesitation. Which goes to show that he was a very unusual manufacturer and retailer, more concerned with the quality of products in general than with the selling of his own products.

New designers introduced

A retailer he now was without doubt just as much as a manufacturer. The workshop about 1928-30 employed about 120 men. The contract department made 1,700 chairs and 450 desks for Bolton School in 1929 and in 1930-31 carried out contracts for Bryanston, Dartington, King's College Aberdeen, Emmanuel College Cam-

bridge and others. Machinery was gradually brought in to dispose of the rough work. Planer, circular saw, band-saw, morticer, spindle, all made their appearance; for Gordon Russell believed (and believes) that there is a job for the hand and a job for the machine. The Broadway showrooms grew and flourished, and London showrooms were opened in Wigmore Street in 1929. The showrooms sold, apart from furniture, a fair amount of textiles and also pottery and glass; Gordon Russell himself had in fact designed table glass first for Stevens & Williams and later for James Powell. Of the furniture also he still designed much, though of the decisive pieces of 1930 and the following years the majority were R. D. and W. H. Russell's. For a short time others also were drawn in: Eden Minns, Robert Goodden, David Booth, and especially Marian Pepler who became Mrs R. D. Russell.

Things being what they were, Gordon Russell's being established as the firm with the best modern designs and the best workmanship in England, Gordon Russell could have sat back and enjoyed his success, and might even for a while have done so, if it had not been for the appearance of Frank Murphy on the scene, ebullient, shrewd, and one of the finest Irish irritants ever. With a telephone call from him to Gordon Russell in 1930 starts Act Three.

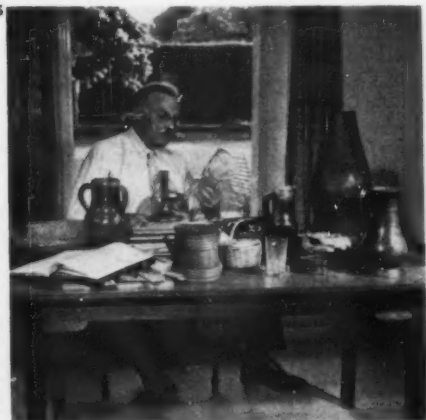
Mass production of radio cabinets

Frank Murphy had just entered the radio trade. Would Gordon Russell consider making cabinets for him? Cabinets were hideous pieces of furnishing. Did he agree? A lot of thought would have to be given to what they ought to look like. Mr Murphy liked the new Gordon Russell style. Was it applicable? So conferences started, and the outcome was a series of cabinets, brought out from 1931 to the war, mostly designed by R. D. Russell, and revolutionising the appearance of wireless cabinets in the whole of England and probably to a certain extent even abroad. The outcome was also the building of a factory at Park Royal which was designed by G. A. Jellicoe and completed in 1935. Mr Jellicoe also designed the beautiful new London showrooms at 40 Wigmore Street, which opened in 1935 too and were among the best designed shops in London. The decision to build at Park Royal was sound. By 1934 Gordon Russell's employed more than 400, and the Broadway workshop was not only obviously inadequate, but the radio work - a hundred per cent machinework as it had to be -

collector

15 Sir Gordon Russell has a rich collection of old and new work by craftsmen. He is handling a seventeenth century baluster stemmed goblet; on the right is a large leather beer jack and to its left is a brass-lipped jack he made himself. A book of Keats' poems, written on vellum by Sir Gordon in 1908, is in the left foreground.

16 In the firm's museum at Broadway Sir Gordon examines a chest of drawers he designed for The Rt Hon David Lloyd George, and made from holly taken from the latter's garden at Churt.



craftsman

17 Part of the vaulted garage roof at Sir Gordon's home; the main vault of this complex was built by him on 30 tons of earth as centering.

18 A skilled stone carver, Sir Gordon is deepening the lettering on his father's tombstone.

19 Gardening takes much of his time when at home. During the preparation of an onion bed he talks to his daughter Kate, who works for the editor of *Graphic* in Zurich.



hotelier

20 Sir Gordon is one of the three directors of the Lygon Arms, Broadway; the other two are his brother Don Russell, chairman, *right*, and Douglas Barrington, *left*.

21 Feeding the seven golden orfe which inhabit the pool at the front of Sir Gordon's home, Kingcombe, near Chipping Campden. His father acted as water diviner before the site was bought.

was bad for the mentality of Broadway. Furthermore, the growth of a large factory would be bad for the amenities of Broadway. So the move took place.

The four or five years that followed were years of achievement. The factory prospered, the contract work prospered, and the showrooms were doing well. Everybody worked with pleasure – because everybody somehow worked for Gordon Russell personally. He went round the workshops and knew all the cabinet-makers, all the upholsterers, the smiths and of course the draughtsmen. He went round the showrooms, sympathetic and amused. He criticised constructively and kept policy in his hands, and his wisdom shone warmly through everything he said and did. Every year new rooms for stock and special purposes, and new individual pieces were brought out that pleased the eye as much as the touch.

Bombay rosewood and African rosewood, sycamore, elm and cherry, and Japanese chestnut were given every chance of displaying their characters. Grace gradually lightened that more exacting squareness which the most uncompromising pieces of 1930 had had. Some Thonet and some Swedish pieces added to the variety and elegance of chairs on show; excellent curtain and upholstery materials were bought at home or abroad or specially developed by such firms as Edinburgh Weavers and Donald Brothers, the principal English living room at the Paris exhibition of 1937 was designed by W. H. Russell and made by Gordon Russell's, catalogues came out regularly and were a joy to handle.

Indeed all was well, and anyone might now at last have relaxed. But Act Four is approaching; and this time the initiative to embark on a new venture and to widen yet further the scope of the firm's endeavours came not from outside but from Gordon Russell himself. With the experience of the Murphy work he could see that good design could be helped far more effectively by offering it through conscientious agents all over the country than by displaying it merely in two showrooms which, moreover, inevitably were regarded by the public as somewhat exclusive. So the idea of the Good Furnishing Group took shape in Gordon Russell's mind. His firm would make furniture in larger batches, using machinery more widely in the making of it, and selling it – with the name Gordon Russell attached to it – through a group of modern-minded and not too exclusive furnishers. They were in the event Beattie's of Wolverhampton, Elsa Booth of Oxford, Elizabeth Denby in

London, Dunn's of Bromley, Gane's of Bristol, Mummery & Harris of Frinton, Rowntree's of Scarborough, Schofield's of Leeds and Wells' of Bedford.

In the event. However, less than a year after this promising experiment had been started and Gordon Russell's had thus for the first time embarked on quantity production of modern furniture, another event interfered; the second war in Gordon Russell's life. This time there were no trenches for him, as there were indeed no trenches for anybody. It was the Home Guard now and the momentous duty of guarding the Mickleton Tunnel against Nazi invaders. But while his own life was less disrupted than it had been in the first war, that of Gordon Russell Ltd was about as disrupted as could be. The Broadway showrooms received an incendiary bomb on their grand and beautiful thatched barn and were half destroyed. The London showrooms were closed down. The factory at Park Royal was taken over by the Admiralty, and the Broadway workshops made ammunition boxes, wind-tunnel models, model aircraft, nosings for Mosquitos, etc, etc.

Public service

Gordon Russell himself, sad but not really ruffled in his optimistic estimate of humanity, resigned his managing directorship of Gordon Russell Ltd and turned to other jobs. So far the story of Gordon Russell has been the story of Gordon Russell's. Here the two separate, though Gordon Russell remained a member of the board, in sympathy and close touch with what went on at Broadway; only now is he returning to a somewhat more active membership of the board of the company.

In 1942 Hugh Dalton, President of the Board of Trade, asked him to join a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Tennyson, which was to advise on the making and distributing of well and inexpensively made standard furniture, in the end rather unfortunately called Utility furniture. A design panel was formed and presided over by Gordon Russell. In 1944 Hugh Dalton set up the Council of Industrial Design, the first government sponsored body of its kind in the world. An original member of the Council, Gordon Russell became its director in 1947. In 1949 this magazine was started. So this is where readers of *DESIGN* came in, and the story of the last eleven years, as far as Gordon Russell is concerned, need but be recapitulated. Externally it is one of honours, orders and decorations, internally of hard work, and never ending

battles against inertia. Sir Gordon became Sir Gordon in 1955.

At home the Council of Industrial Design, which had been engaged almost at once in the *Britain Can Make It Exhibition*, was involved from 1948 onwards in the Festival of Britain, 1951. The problems of his directorship were great. Many large old-established manufacturing firms distrusted the Council and all he personally stood for. Others were ready to concede points but not to go the whole way. Ought one to be exacting and promote only the best – as Gordon Russell had done in his own firm, at the expense, no doubt, of much money to be got by compromising – or ought one to encourage those ready to improve, even if for the time being their results were not up to the highest standards?

Improvement by evolution

What Sir Gordon Russell's attitude would be could be foreseen by anybody who knew him. He used to say he would rather spend a day in talking privately to a manufacturer than in administration or public lecturing – though he was equally excellent at both these occupations. Sir Gordon does not believe in revolution, his lifework for Gordon Russell's has been one of evolution, steady, dictated by faith and high moral standards, but conciliatory and never demonstrative. So from year to year and exhibition to exhibition complaints from the purists appeared against the Council for admitting this, that and the other that was not really good enough, and yet from year to year the standard in British industrial design rose, guided kindly by the man who at the age of about sixty had become its unchallenged mentor.

I can here speak from personal experience, as I made a survey of industrial art in England in 1934–35, registering and discussing what was good, bad and in-

different in it, and after that was buyer to Gordon Russell's till the beginning of the war and so knew what could be bought and at what prices. The difference between then and now is enormous. Not that we have much reason as yet to rest on our laurels. The experience of shops in Denmark and Sweden is still mortifying. But if so many more firms – manufacturers as well as distributors – display modern design and even appreciate good modern design, if – in other words – this magazine can fill its pages handsomely, this is due to no single man more than to the retiring director of the CoID.

Retiring he is, and not only in the way this last sentence meant it. Even his friends will find it difficult to define what lies behind this friendly, quizzical expression and this warm interest in them and their affairs. Some resignation no doubt, but at the very bottom also an unshakable belief in life and in the good ethically as well as aesthetically. What will he retire to? What is Act Five going to be?

It has already been said that Sir Gordon is taking up a more active part once again on the board of Gordon Russell Ltd. He will also no doubt be honoured and pestered by all kinds of official, time-consuming appointments, chairing this and advising on that. But there are more important things to do. There is the garden at Kingcombe, and there is the house that somehow never ceases to grow and change. Have you ever tried to build a dry wall? Have you ever tried to build a brick vault 14-ft across with no wooden centering, but on a solid earth centering to be removed when the vault has set? Bees were a passion at one time, leather bottles at another. The Coronation was privately celebrated by a piece of stone carving. So what will come next is anybody's guess. Only one thing is certain. It will not be a grandfather chair by the fireside.



Sir Gordon found his work on the CoID Coronation souvenir committee so gruelling that he decided to make his own personal contribution. Here it supports the table at which he is at lunch with Lady Russell and their daughter Kate.

GRAPHIC DESIGN 4

HERBERT SPENCER

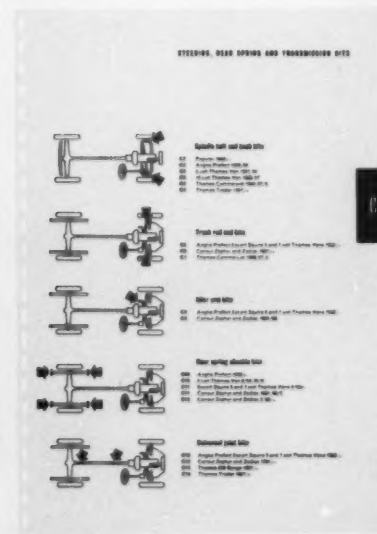
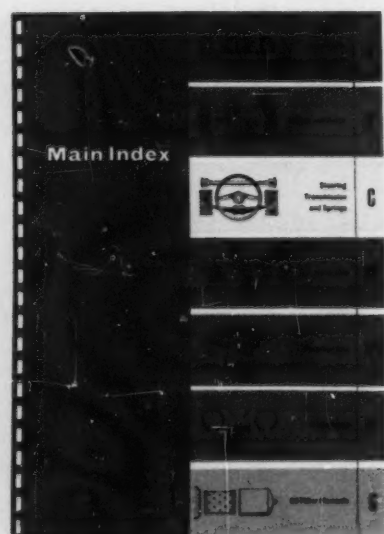
Of the many booklets, folders and leaflets which appear on the office desk or are pushed through the letter box each day, few are read thoroughly. The graphic designer has great opportunities for stimulating the reader's interest by lively and imaginative design

A substantial slice of the printing industry's annual turnover is represented by booklets, folders and leaflets, yet only a small part of this enormous output is read or even scanned. Unlike the poster, which today has usually an assured site and a fixed life-span, or the Press advertisement, which the buyer of a magazine or newspaper at least knowingly embraces, the booklet or leaflet often arrives unsolicited and indeed unwanted. Its fleeting life is a battle for survival. If its purpose is to persuade, then the design of the cover or front page must at once arrest attention and intrigue the reader. If its primary function is to provide information, then it must quickly and clearly announce its identity. In both cases the inside matter must be presented in a manner which is clear and efficient but not dull.

Few booklets or leaflets fall neatly into one category or the other; most occupy a position midway between the two extremes. Persuasive sales talk jostles with solid facts. And this provides the graphic designer with opportunities to evolve designs which are lively and imaginative in conception yet disciplined and sound in detail. Relatively few designs, it must be admitted, succeed on both scores. Those that do are invariably simple and dramatic in conception, bright (but not harsh) and emphatic, with typography which is clean, clear and unfussy.

Until quite recently the sales literature, catalogues, and instruction manuals put out by British manufacturers lagged sadly behind those of many of their foreign rivals. But, perhaps stimulated by increasingly keen Continental competition, Britain is today producing a rising flood of printed matter which is both well designed and editorially well conceived. British manufacturers and merchants seem at last to have grasped that cold facts and concise arguments, intelligently presented, serve their ends more effectively than frozen platitudes garnished with an indigestible sauce of visual gimmickry, indifferent photography, irrelevant illustration, and vulgar typography.

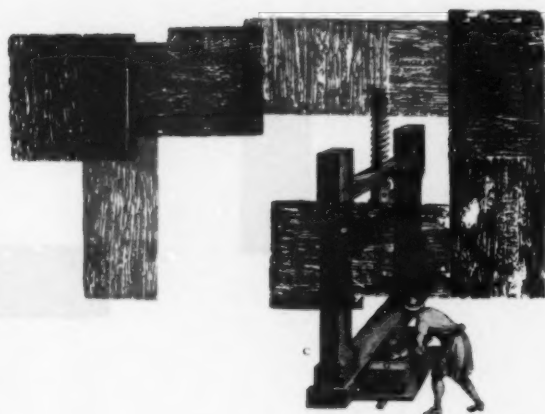
Visual aid catalogue of service and repair kits. Clean, clear typography, simple and efficient diagrams and rational use of colour make this catalogue a first-rate example of what technical literature ought to look like. DESIGNERS *Richard Daynes (typography) and François de Mauny (symbols)* of H. Hacker Design Group. PRINTER H. Hacker Ltd. PUBLISHER Parts Division of Ford Motor Co Ltd.



Dover Opague offset carriage

The earliest records of Wiggins Teape date back to 1781. At this period the Vulcan Coucher Loyer and Dryer with simple equipment and great skill produced the handmade sheet. Now almost 200 years later Wiggins Teape with 18 mills & a vast store of experience can offer some 5,000 different qualities of paper. Dover Opague is one of these qualities. Made under strict quality control conditions it will Litho perfectly and is also very suitable for Letterpress and Photogravure.

Although handmade paper varied considerably from making to making the simple printing arrangements of wood blocks & type produced, in the hands of craftsmen, many charming pieces of print. Present day machining processes require a high degree of dimensional stability and uniformity of finish in printing papers & the comprehensive system of quality control operating throughout the Wiggins Teape Group mills ensures this.



The colour work on this folder is reproduced from wood block impressions by Letterpress. The black working of the illustrations & type is by Lithography. The typeface is Grotesque No. 1 for text and Venus Medium Extended headings. The folder was designed by the Wiggins Teape Publicity Design Unit.

Uncomplicated typography carefully related to light-hearted decoration in a paper specimen folder.
DESIGNER *J. R. Prest of Wiggins Teape Publicity Design Unit.* PRINTER *John Swain & Son Ltd.* PUBLISHER *Wiggins Teape Group.*

An ingenious and appropriate 'two-way' use of transparent paper enlivens the final spread of this booklet.
DESIGNER *David Collins in conjunction with B E A Advertising Branch.* PRINTER *The Artisan Press Ltd.* PUBLISHER *British European Airways.*

Addresses of principal engaging officials

London area

Head Office
Principal Office (Head Office)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

Traffic Department
Principal Office (London Airport Station)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

Technical Department
Principal Office
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

General Office
Principal Office
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

Flight Operations Department
Principal Office (London Airport Station)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

Engineering Department
Principal Office (London Airport Station)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

Commercial and Sales Department
Principal Office (London Airport Station)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

Engineering Department
Principal Office (London Airport Station)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

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Principal Office
Principal Office (London Airport Station)
Mrs. Evelyn Haver
Rushley, Middlesex

A tradition of service

A former airman designer once said that a most useful device was one that could suggest itself to the airman as well as to the designer.

Now, too, we say that one of the most useful devices is one that can be used in two ways.

The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.

The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.

The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.

The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.

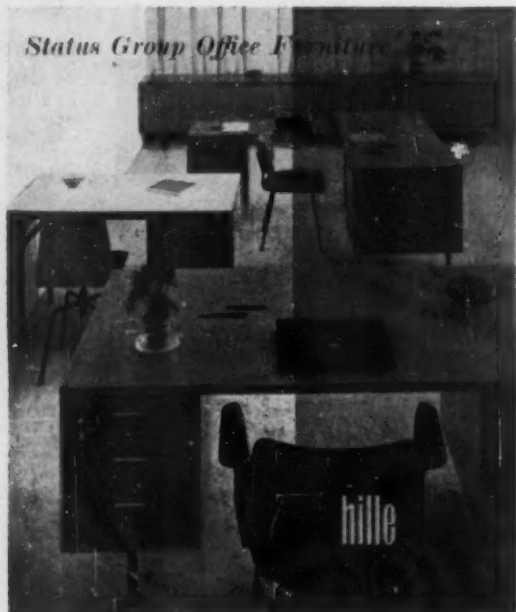
The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.

The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.

The first way is to use it as a design. The second way is to use it as a device.



Cover for a catalogue of office furniture. The precise composition of the photograph combines well with the type. An example of close (and rare) co-operation between graphic designer, photographer and client. DESIGNERS Robin Day and June Fraser. PHOTOGRAPHER Tony Mann. PRINTER H. P. Dorey & Co Ltd. PUBLISHER Hille of London Ltd.



Catalogue of films. The typography and colour here have been selected to reflect the drama of the subject. PRODUCER Contact Publications Ltd (art editor Eric Ayres). DESIGNER Richard Hollis. PRINTER Tillotsons (Bolton) Ltd. PUBLISHER British Iron and Steel Federation.



Modern Silver

An elegant, carefully composed cover design for a review of modern British gold and sterling silver, and inside, sensitive scaling and positioning of photographs. DESIGNER Dennis Bailey. PRINTER Taurus Press Ltd. PUBLISHER The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, Cheapside, EC2. Price 2s.



Two double spreads from the *Modern Silver* review.

Three excellent leaflets from a series on films. They are printed in black only on a wide variety of inexpensive tinted papers. For their effect the leaflets depend upon good illustration, sound typography and impeccable printing. *Left* ILLUSTRATOR Edward Bawden. DESIGNER Charles Hasler. *Centre* ILLUSTRATOR John O'Connor. DESIGNER Ray Roberts. *Right* ILLUSTRATOR Zelma Blakely.

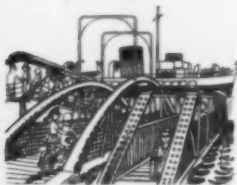
DESIGNER Charles Hasler. PRINTER D. Greenaway & Sons Ltd. PUBLISHER British Transport Films.

Far right Also for the British Transport film library; dramatic use is made of a photogram for the cover of an outstandingly well-arranged catalogue. DESIGNER Hans Schleger. PRINTER The Curwen Press Ltd. PUBLISHER British Transport Films.

Cover for a catalogue of gear cutting machines. The firm's logotype, turned sideways, forms the basis of this powerful design. DESIGNER Richard Hamilton. PRINTER W. & J. Rounce Ltd. PUBLISHER Churchill Gear Machines Ltd.



Round the ISLAND



There is always something exciting about crossing the sea to begin one's holiday. Even though Portsmouth is only half-an-hour's ferry ride behind, a new visitor to the Isle of Wight finds a strange excitement in viewing his distant homeland from across Spithead.

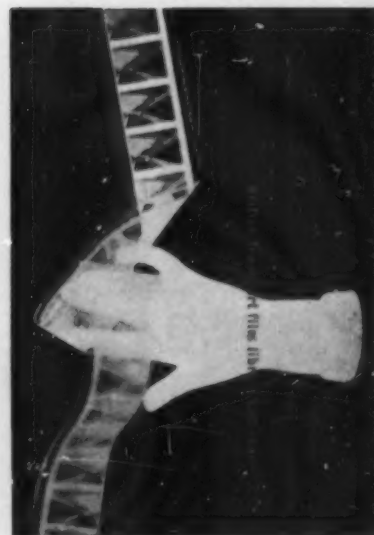


Lancashire COAST

Yorkshire SANDS

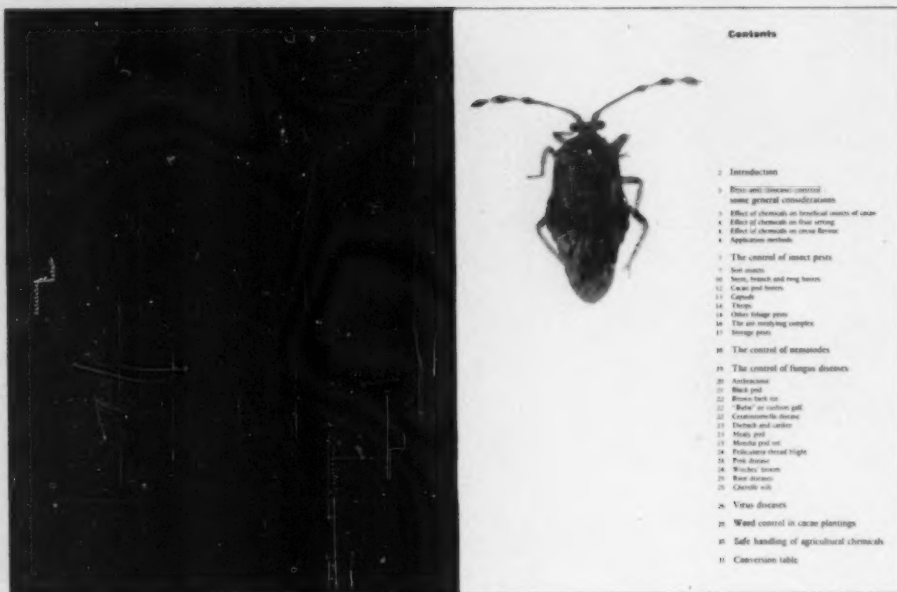


For a hundred miles the seaboard of YORKSHIRE drinks in the warm summer sunshine. From BRIGHAM to SPURH HEAD at the mouth of the Humber the coastline, sweeping south-eastward, displays both rugged cliffs and sandy beaches.

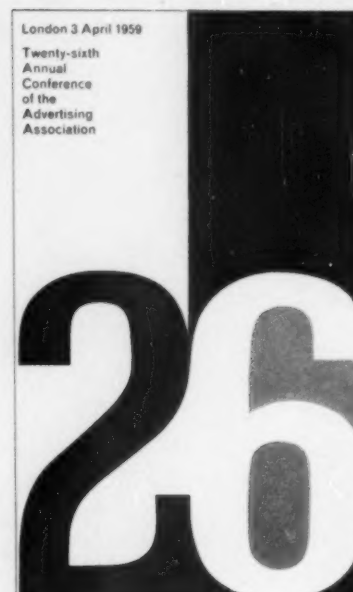


Booklet on Cacao: pest, disease and weed control. Clean typography, and the sensitive and dramatic use of colour, combine to create an interesting opening spread.

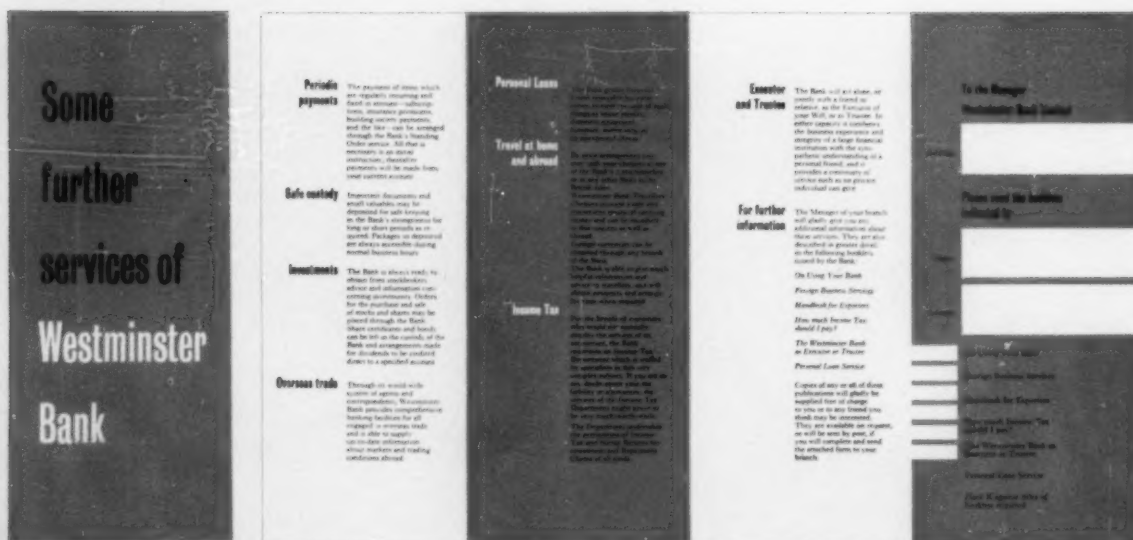
DESIGNER *John Denison-Hunt*. PRINTER *Roland Brothers Ltd.* PUBLISHER *Shell International Chemical Co Ltd.*

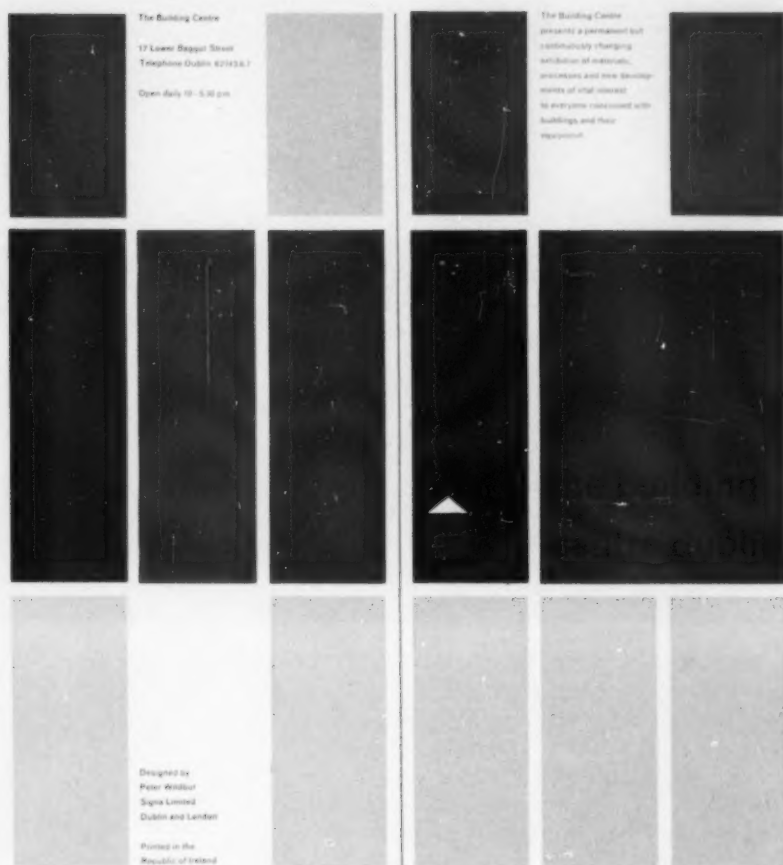


Scribbling pad. Vigorous, colourful and clear, the cover at once inspires a sense of occasion but entirely avoids pomposity. DESIGNER *Alan Fletcher*. PRINTER *Zincography Ltd*. PUBLISHER *Time*, the weekly news magazine.



Leaflet on bank services. A simple, dignified solution which depends for its effect on careful composition and first class printing. DESIGNER *Printer in conjunction with publisher.* PRINTER *The Curwen Press Ltd.* PUBLISHER *Westminster Bank Ltd.*





Front and back cover of a leaflet describing this permanent exhibition. A lively, articulate design. DESIGNER *Peter Wildbur* of *Signa Ltd.* PUBLISHER *The Building Centre, Dublin.*

Slip-case for catalogue of machine coated papers. Placard bold and Garamond italics make a strong and effective contrast. DESIGNER *Herbert Spencer.* PRINTER *Chas. F. Ince & Sons Ltd.* PUBLISHER *John Pollock Ltd.*



People in print



Herbert Spencer, 35, author of the article on these pages, started his career as a consultant designer directly after the war. Since 1948 he has been free lance, and he is editor of *Typographica* as well as the *SLA Journal*. Mr Spencer's work includes house styles together with some packaging and display design.



Dennis Bailey, 29, who designed the *Modern Silver* booklet on pages 38, 39, commenced his training in the illustration school of the West Sussex College of Art and Crafts. In 1950 he gained a travelling scholarship at the Royal College of Art. In 1956 Mr Bailey was on the staff of *Graphic*; since then he has free lanced both here and abroad. Mr Bailey comments: "compared with the precision standards of Switzerland, there is something left to be desired with British printing and blockmaking".



John Denison-Hunt, 38, has designed brochures for many national and industrial concerns both at home and abroad. Among his free lance designs for Shell International Chemical Co is the booklet on page 40. He was art editor of several technical and consumer magazines before taking up free lance practice in 1949. The design of brochures and typographical displays is now his main work. He comments: "British booklets, folders and leaflets are generally of mediocre quality; the design standard is below what it could be".



The destructive use of the atom produced the mushroom cloud, now so familiar an image that it can be used on the sleeve of a jazz record without explanation or comment. *The Atomic Mr Basie* is released by Columbia Gramophone Co. Ltd.

Atomic abstract

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

In this country there is a need to take more advantage of the resources of the mass media to create a vivid imagery of nuclear power. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, through its press office, feeds information to a public divided for convenience into three tiers. These are, to use the press office's terms, the specialist, the semi-specialist, and the layman.

Possibly the exhibition programme of the authority is the closest to mid-century techniques and standards of persuasion. A typical exhibition stand, ABOVE RIGHT, was designed by James Gardner in conjunction with Ronald Smith for the last Milan *Samples Fair*. It includes a mural 42 ft x 9 ft 8 inches, by Mr Smith and Geoffrey Gale, which backs a long array of fuel elements.

The mural's programme reads from left to right, like a big sentence. After an opening scatter of forms, a structure emerges based on photographs of Calder Hall. The large fish-bone form that follows is derived from the fuel element itself. Then there is a caesura, no programme, just a visual bridge leading to organic forms, turbulent at first (for the breakdown of the rods) and, after that, cooling off. The colour goes from yellow, through orange and brown, to blue. The mural, though derived from bits of nuclear power plant apparatus, symbolises the process in a Dantesque sort of way. The technique used by the designers was to block in a basic skeleton struc-

ture; over this they laid coloured tissue paper, in flat stretched areas or in wrinkled hanks, as well as using oil paint. The rich surface that results is transparent in a way analogous to glazing. (A semi-matt varnish protected the tissues and paint from the Italian climate.)

The mural is worth recording because it cannibalises *current* abstract painting which is, considering the usual visual resources of British atomics, image-making and a good sign.

Atomic iconography

The importance of eye-catching and up-to-date visual images for atomics should not need stressing but, in England, it is necessary. There is a popular iconography of atomics which circulates constantly in elite and mass communications, but it is the destructive use of atomics which gets dramatised. This is true of the newspapers, whose coverage of peaceful uses is routine compared to their presentation of military applications. It is no less true of poets (Edith Sitwell – the first poet to use that mushroom cloud as imagery, and Gregory Corso – the most recent, though not, you can be sure, the last) or of American film-makers (*Hell and High Water*, 1954 was the first adventure movie to use an atomic bomb).

All the vividness, all the familiarity, associated with atomics belongs to the negative uses. In America peaceful atomics have been presented to the public in terms no less exciting than, say, new cars or satellites. For example, as early as 1949 *Astounding Science Fiction* had a cover story about Brookhaven National Laboratory pile. Comparable British features are hard to find, whereas they are plentiful in the United States (see *Time* and *Life*, for example). In this context, the use of popular abstract art by the UKAEA (instead of the usual power station or atom diagram clichés) is to be commended and encouraged by anybody who hopes for a public educated in atomics or with, at least, a sense of what the peaceful use of atomic power means.



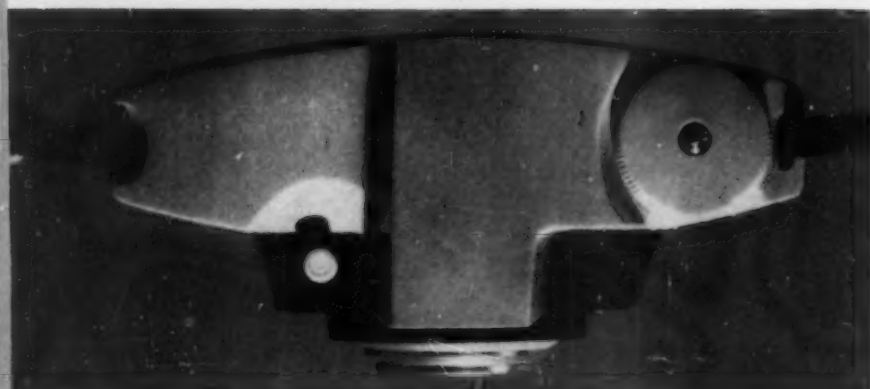
DESIGN ANALYSIS 16

Camera

CONSULTANT DESIGNER *Kenneth Grange*. MAKER *Kodak Ltd.* £2 14s 1d (including ever-ready cover)

MALCOLM J. BROOKES

Six of Kodak's Brownie 44A, recently announced, were used for a period of six weeks by 10 testers. The article is based upon the comments of this team consisting of seven men and three women, whose photographic abilities extended from the expert professional (DESIGN's photographer Alfred Lammer) to the humble amateur; the remarks of an ergonomics consultant (Brian Shackel); bench and laboratory tests of each of the cameras; and a critical examination of over 200 photographs taken by the testers. The cameras were selected at random from Kodak's production line. The manufacturer's comments are on page 47.



1 Of the cameras on the market today, the widest selection is among the 35 mm models priced at about £20. Below this price bracket, models become fewer until at the bottom end of the scale is found the well-known box camera costing about £1 10s. With this in mind it is astonishing to learn when seeing Kodak's new *Brownie 44A* for the first time that its price is only £2 14s 1d. The first impression of this unusual camera suggests that it is a more expensive miniature type. It is most refreshing to see a camera manufacturer employing an experienced consultant to design such an inexpensive model. As well as introducing a new design the maker has departed from the usual constructional materials and high-impact plastics are used extensively; the introduction of a fitted semi-case is an unusual feature.

2 **Picture quality** The *Brownie 44A* is a simple camera having a single shutter speed, nominally $\frac{1}{40}$ second, and a choice of two apertures, exposure values 12 and 13*; the lens is formed from an acrylic resin. Yet even with this minimum of controls and a single element lens the photographs taken with the camera were of surprisingly good quality. As was to be expected, the lens tests showed that definition improved when the aperture was stopped down from 12 to value 13, at the same time increasing sharpness of focus towards the corners. Some pincushion distortion was in evidence; but the prints examined had been enlarged some four times, far more than would normally be expected from the $1\frac{1}{8}$ -inch sq negatives of the 127 size film. The small, square format enables 12 exposures to be made on one roll of film.

Appearance Kenneth Grange, the consultant de-

*The term "exposure value" is a numerical relationship between aperture and shutter speed, each unit increase in exposure value halving the exposure. Tables are based on f2 and 1 second as exposure value 2.



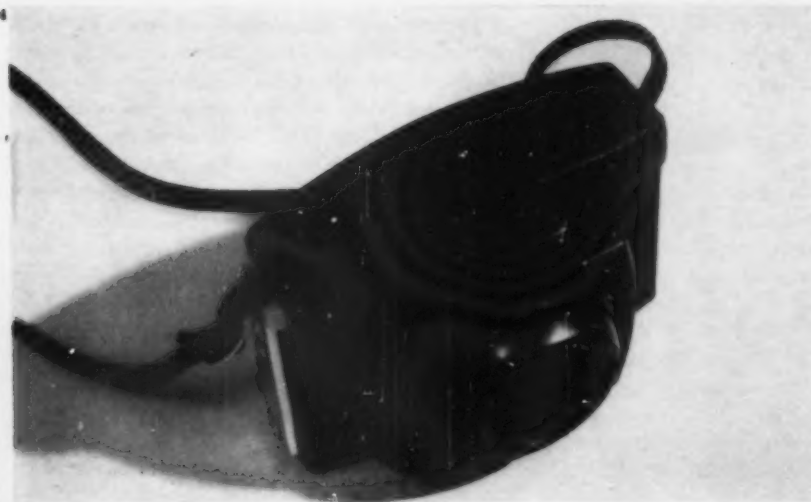
signer chosen by Kodak Ltd as a result of recommendations by the CoID's Record of Designers, was called in some time after this new camera project had commenced. In the camera body visual interest is concentrated in two parts – the top moulding which houses the viewfinder, and the lens mount.

The top moulding is particularly good. Although in plan view the shape is symmetrical, 1, (an ellipse with truncated ends), the design neatly disguises the asymmetry of the forms. The viewfinder running from front to back is the dominating feature which ties the shape together. Its pronounced hood exaggerates the depth of the camera and makes it look substantial and solid. It comes as a surprise to find that the camera weighs under 9 oz. Slight curvature on the forms with sharply radiused corners and confident detailing around the trigger and wind-on knobs combine to make this a successful piece of three dimensional design.

However, the lens mounting is not so satisfactory. The concentric rings of the lens mount give the impression of more complicated adjustments than exist. The block on which the lens stands is rectangular where it joins the camera body but the sides taper and curve towards the front end to join the grey anodised metal panel. The indeterminate forms so produced have none of the authority and conviction of the top moulding.

Lettering on the lens mount is good, but being printed the numbers may wear off in time. On one camera there were signs of this beginning to happen.

The camera in use The unusual semi-case hinges from beneath the front edge of the camera body, 3. When closed, 4, it forms adequate protection for the optics and moving parts and is a radical change from the usual ever-



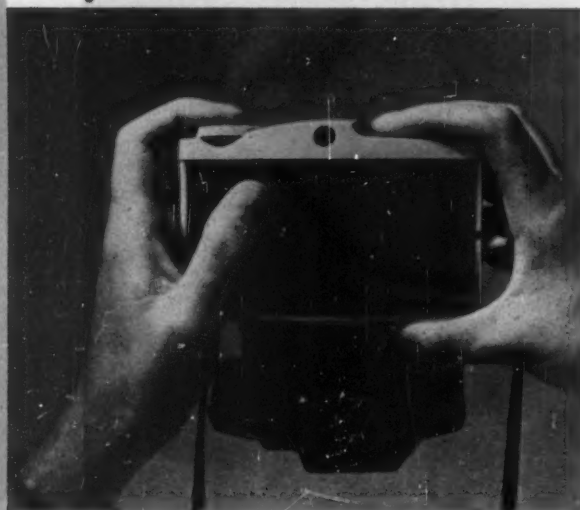
5



5 An illustration from the *Brownie 44A* instruction booklet under the heading 'Holding the Camera'. If the index finger is used to operate the shutter release, the relevant movement of the muscles at the base of the thumb will cause some movement of the camera, even though slight.

Two views on holding

6



6, 7 For those with large hands Mr Shackel suggests an alternative method for holding the camera. The index finger lies along the top moulding with the thumb providing an opposing force along the base; thus the camera is squeezed between the finger and thumb while the second finger operates the shutter release.

7



ready case. The thin edge folded over the top moulding is designed to be easily deformed so that the case may be opened.

With the case open during use, it is possible for the case hinges to be slightly disengaged and become jammed so that when attempting to close the case, the lid fouls on the viewfinder housing. While the remedy is to re-locate the hinges, the fault is not easily discovered. Normally the case hangs well clear of the lens, but if the camera is pointed downwards it needs a positive action to keep the case from obscuring the lens.

There are several makes of inexpensive camera which can be criticised through having inadequate viewfinders; however, the *Brownie 44A* is not among them. Even those who wear spectacles had no difficulty in framing the subject. This model's viewfinder is clear and appears to be accurate even when used with a close-up attachment down to a distance of 4 ft. Below this a parallax error becomes noticeable; even then it would not cause serious cut-off if the lens were no less than 30 inches from the subject.

Shutter release Simple cameras often perpetrate the fault of having a stiff or strong shutter release mechanism. This encourages movement of the camera while taking a photograph, so promoting blurring. It is on this count that the *Brownie 44A* must face strong criticism.

The testers commented on the difficulty of overcoming camera shake. The trigger movement is nearly $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and the return spring grows progressively stronger as the release is depressed. It has the effect of masking the precise instant at which the shutter is to open, creating a feeling of uncertainty in the user. Examination of the many photographs taken during tests disclosed camera shake, particularly before the testers became accustomed to the camera. It was evident that those who held the camera as indicated in the associated instruction booklet, 5, were more prone to camera shake than those who discovered their own methods. Mr Shackel points out that with the present trigger location and direction of movement, the relevant movement of the hand muscles when squeezing with the index finger, as shown in 5, must cause some thickening of the muscle pad at the base of thumb and index finger. Hence, however tightly the camera is gripped with the other fingers of the right hand and with those of the left hand, some movement of the camera, though slight, is bound to occur.

A preferable method of holding the camera was soon found by the testers. This was to use the second finger of the right hand for shutter operation, pressing the bottom corner of the camera into the ball of the thumb. Another method is shown in 6 and 7.

The lens stop lever for changing the aperture demands further attention. Situated as it is on the lens mount at the side of the outer ring and inside the lip of the curving rectangular block, 2, it is difficult to operate. A small bevelled knob or an upturned end would make it easier to push at the same time as depressing it from its positive location groove.

Loading The back of the camera opens to provide access to the interior. Its lock is positive and the method of light-sealing effective. Perhaps the substantial hinge

upon which the back is mounted looks incongruous in comparison with the weight it carries, but at least the hinge should stand a large amount of mishandling.

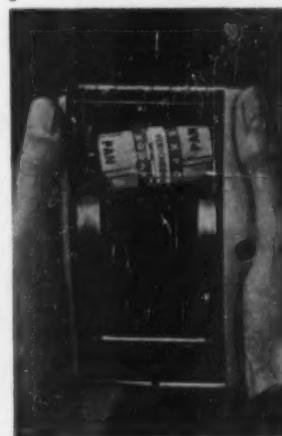
Kodak has taken considerable trouble to provide a simple and ingenious method for loading and unloading, and the neat way of removing exposed spools by means of a rising jaw operated by a lever is praise-worthy, 8.

Accessories For the amateur who wishes to use the camera to its full extent, there are some attachments which can be supplied, and these are common to several of Kodak's inexpensive cameras. The method of securing a lens hood, close-up lens or filter is, however, primitive. According to the instruction supplied with each attachment, if the pressure fit over the lens is incorrect, the lugs on the fitting should be bent slightly to secure a better fit. The system works for filter and lens attachment but inevitably it will result in scratching the lens mount, and when using the heavier lens hood there was a tendency for it to become loose and drop off, which happened on several occasions. The flash attachment is extremely simple to use and fit – a few turns on a screw and it is ready for use.

Conclusion Here is a product which has obviously

attempted an approach far in advance of its competitors. There can be little doubt that the *Brownie 44A* will have successful sales on its good appearance alone. This is the maker's first intent. Seldom do camera manufacturers bother to employ a consultant designer and Kodak's efforts in stimulating good modern design of cheap cameras are most welcome, particularly at a time when the markets are flooded with more expensive models for the gadget-minded amateur.

The *44A*'s performance in matters of definition and resolution and its ability to take satisfactory colour, and black-and-white photographs are amply shown by the testers' results. The chief criticisms concern difficulties in handling. This is not a matter confined to the *Brownie 44A* alone – in fact it is only fair to say that it is rarely considered in camera design at all, and then only occasionally in the most expensive equipment. It should also be emphasised that Kodak's new model is no more difficult to use than other cameras – it is easier than many costing a good deal more. In criticising certain handling characteristics we are therefore directing attention to an aspect of camera design generally given less consideration by the industry than we believe it deserves.



The manufacturer comments

In designing the *Brownie 44A* camera, our aim was to produce an inexpensive camera of outstanding appearance, versatility and performance. In its comprehensive review, *DESIGN* comments favourably on its appearance; "... it is astonishing to learn ... that its price is only £2 14s 1d". Its versatility receives little mention, though the camera can be used for black-and-white prints, colour transparencies, colour prints and flash photography. Of its performance *DESIGN* is critical; the report as a whole contains rather more words in adverse than in favourable comment.

It should be realised at the outset that a camera cannot be produced for £2 14s 1d unless its components are of the simplest construction, and *DESIGN*'s criticisms are aimed at such components – necessarily common to all inexpensive cameras – rather than to the *Brownie 44A* in particular.

The shutter release mechanism, for example, is criticised as being so strong as to cause camera shake, and in the last paragraph this is ascribed to neglect on the part of the photographic industry. This assumption is sadly in error – modern shutter mechanisms in all types of cameras are the result of a vast and continuing amount of research and development work. Admittedly there are lighter shutters, but they are found only in cameras costing many times the price of the *Brownie 44A*. We know of no camera with flash contacts in this price range with a lighter shutter, and if we knew how to make one it would be fitted.

But is the shutter such that it is likely to lead to trouble

in general use? Fortunately we have very strong evidence that it is not, because the shutter fitted to the *Brownie 44A* is identical with that fitted to another lightweight plastics camera which we have sold by the hundreds of thousands, and which has given no significant trouble due to camera shake.

The method of attachment of filters, close-up lens and camera hood is described as primitive. It is used by many manufacturers of low cost cameras and has proved adequate in practice over many years. The criticism would have been more constructive had it suggested an improved method of fitting, which would not have shifted the camera out of its present price class. Our opinion, therefore, is that the main criticisms of performance are rather like commenting adversely on a popular mass produced 'people's car' because its performance falls behind that of a Rolls Royce.

Our other comments are relatively minor. *DESIGN*'s fears that the printing on the lens mount may wear off are not substantiated by our experience with similar printing on previous cameras. It is valuable to know that the action of the lens stop lever was criticised; we shall re-examine this and other aspects. The section on holding the camera was interesting; any camera will give shake at $\frac{1}{40}$ second exposure if the shutter release is jerked or if the camera is not held firmly, and the user will, as *DESIGN* indicates, discover his own best method of operation.

In conclusion, we should like to express our appreciation of the care, effort and thought which *DESIGN* has put into its most comprehensive report.



An enquiry into **DESIGNER-CLIENT** relationships

Manufacturers sometimes complain of high fees charged by consultant designers – or of insufficient work done. Designers, for their part, report lack of understanding and co-operation on the part of certain manufacturers. It is clear that too many designer-client relationships are unsatisfactory; this state of affairs, aggravated by rumours and gibes, can do much harm to the design profession. In an attempt to help matters DESIGN has collected facts and assessed apparent reasons for success and failure in four cases. The cases were chosen from one industry – in this instance from the furniture industry – so that direct comparisons could be made. Independent visits were made to four manufacturers and to four designers who were, or had been, employed by them as consultants. In two cases the relationships were known to have been fruitful; in two they had failed. The names of the four firms mentioned are entirely fictitious.

A small sample of four firms can hardly be representative of the wide variety of companies which make up the furniture industry. But, taken together, they exhibit many different characteristics, which are set out briefly here, the two 'successful' firms coming first. The descriptions apply to the firms *before* the design consultants were employed.

1 *Cabco* A small but growing firm of cabinet makers producing a limited range of traditional furniture at a medium price with good materials and workmanship.

2 *Modmake* A medium-sized firm making a variety of carcase furniture, mostly high quality reproduction and traditional work, for retail, contract and export markets.

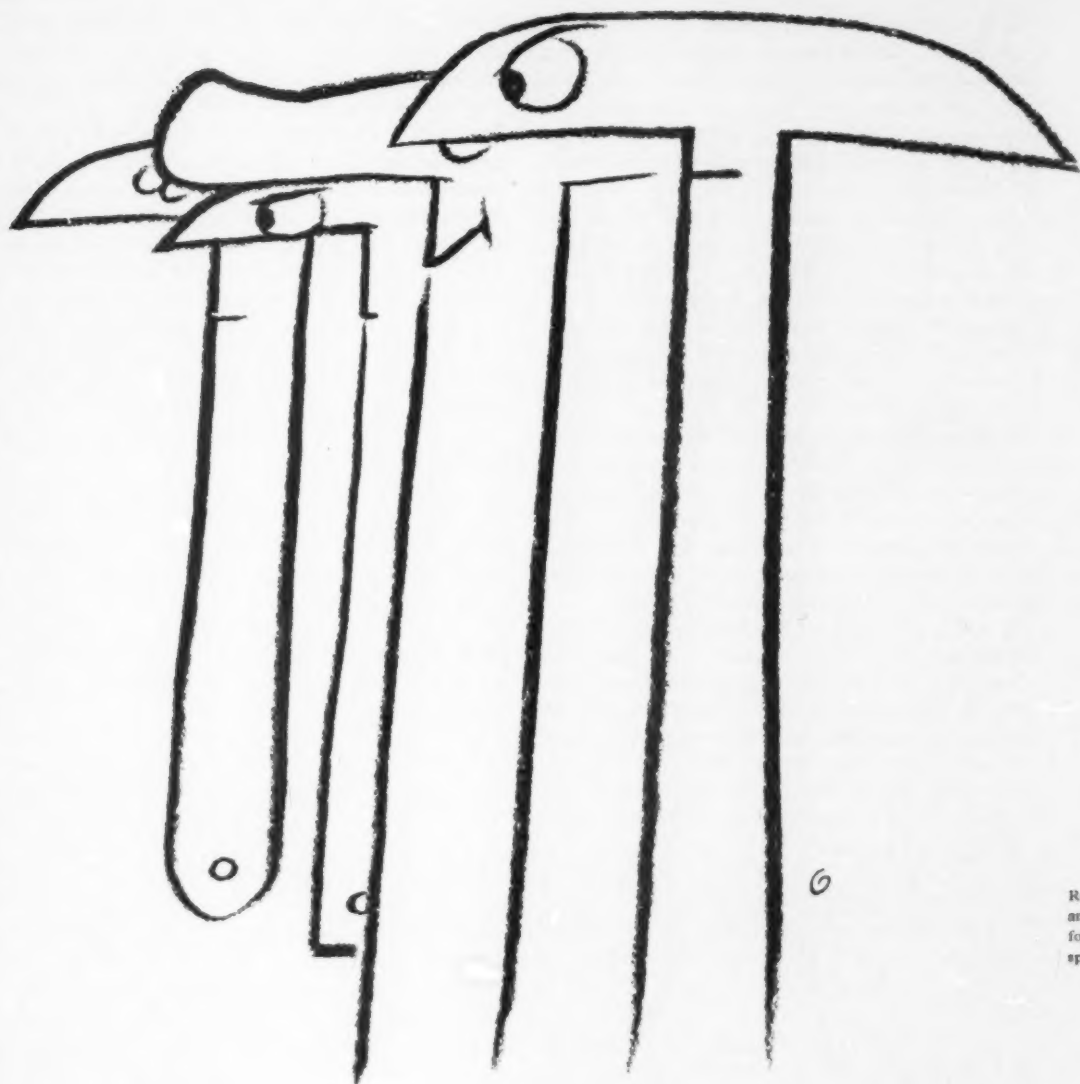
3 *Chairform* A medium-sized firm doing upholstery

and cabinet work at a fairly low price and in limited ranges for a few retail outlets.

4 *Kitwork* A larger firm making a variety of kitchen and other furniture at a low price for large-scale distribution all over the country.

Furniture production and marketing are complex operations and firms may vary in skill and quality of workmanship, in capital resources and efficiency of organisation, in willingness to take business risks and in attitude to design. Choosing the right designer for each set of circumstances is not easy. How did the four firms do it?

They began with a common desire – to break away from their tradition and do something new. For the first two it was largely a matter of pride. Cabco, which



Robert Osborn, the American humorist and social commentator, was responsible for the money bags and tee squares, specially drawn for DESIGN

had a poor modern design rejected by the CoID's 'Design Index' committee wanted to prove it could do better. Modmake wanted to "strike a blow for British design" at a time when it was badly needed. With the other two it was more a matter of keeping up with the times.

All the firms chose designers as a result of consultations with the CoID's Record of Designers. The managing director of Cabco received a list of several names but interviewed only the first on it. From the start these two men got on well and the managing director gave the designer a free hand with his first commission, a sideboard. The responsible director of Chairform, a provincial firm, recalls only two names on his list: a local designer who, in interview, proved to have insufficient

specialised experience for the job envisaged; and a London man whom the directors accepted after a discussion during which they saw illustrations of his previous work. They then gave some idea of the three-piece upholstered suite they wanted designed.

Kitwork, seeking a versatile designer who might be at home in any part of its wide product range, interviewed one such consultant and asked him to try his hand at a kitchen cabinet, giving him a free hand as Cabco did.

Finally, Modmake picked its designer on his recently won reputation, liked him at once and commissioned him to design a sideboard, also giving him a free hand.

With Cabco and Modmake the relationship between

directors and designers was excellent from the start. In each case the designer inspired confidence by appearing practical, conscientious and determined, while having a pleasant manner. He was in turn impressed by the firm's technical background, concern for quality and willingness to take big business risks with new designs, as well as the ease with which he could talk to the director. Here was a firm basis on which to build confidence, and Modmake noticed it particularly because the company was, at the same time, experimenting with another designer whom it found less practical.

No such foundation was laid in the other two cases. In one case relations were much more formal and communication was mainly by letters (and when the designer first visited the factory he was left at 1 pm to find his own lunch and transport to the station); in the other they were friendly but contact was largely at sales manager level; also the firms were tentative in their approach to the project. Neither designer was much impressed by his firm's technical capacity and neither sensed there the enthusiasm necessary to see a design policy through its difficult formative stages.

A designer needs either a free hand or a clear and consistent brief if he is to do satisfactory work. Cabco and Modmake chose to give freedom, but they acquainted the designers fully with the factory methods and equipment, the types of skill available and their outlook and policy.

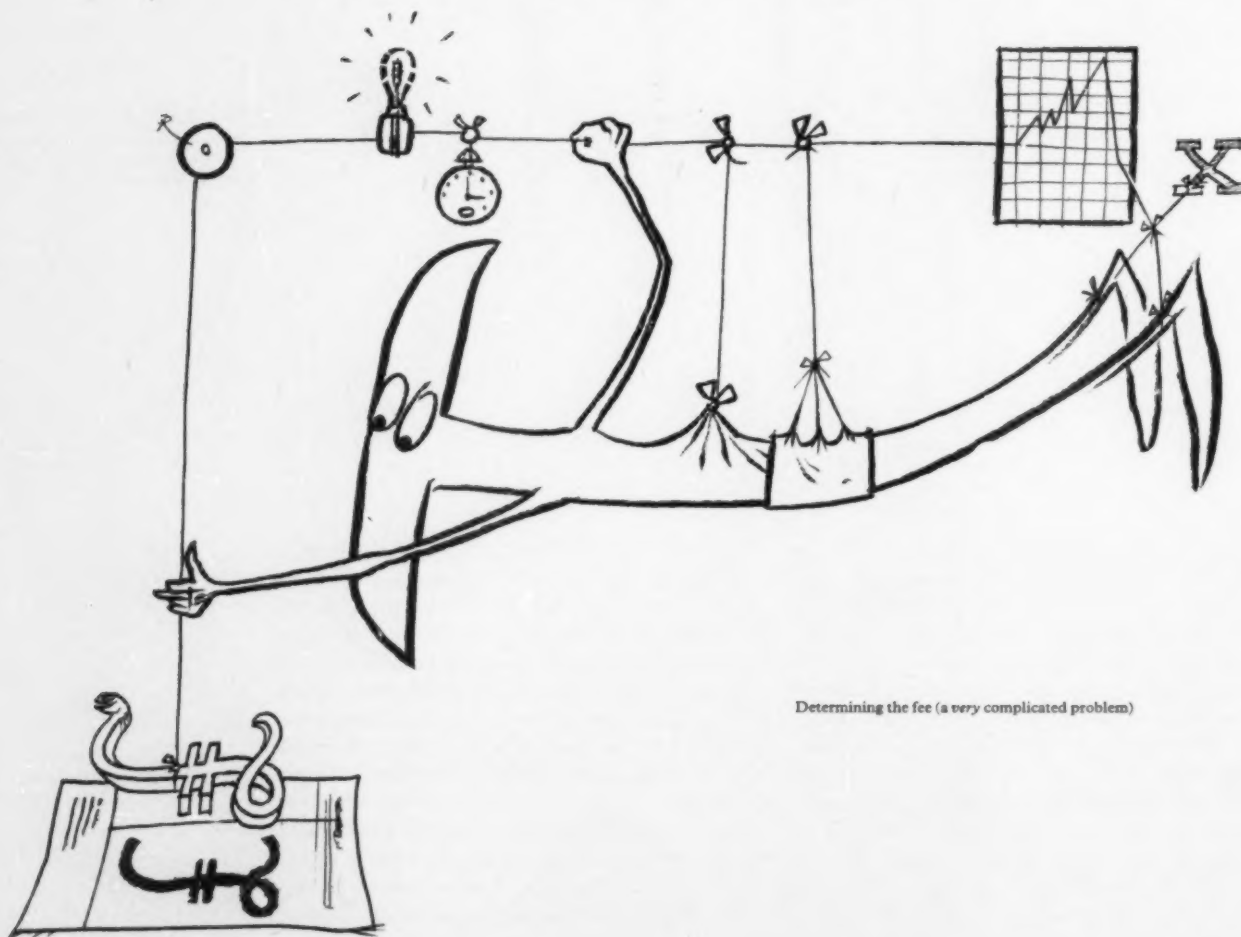
Both designers absorbed as much of this information as they could and each set out to produce a design that would satisfy both his own artistic integrity and the firm's wish for something new.

In the two other cases a brief was attempted, but it never got beyond very general terms. Chairform said it wanted something that would replace an existing (and quite successful) suite, i.e., something that would sell as well in the same market, while being more advanced. But it prescribed no particular style, finish or method of construction and the designer, seeing that the firm was already making chairs with metal frames, thought it would be prepared to accept a technically more advanced design. Nor was the price fixed at all precisely, though this factor eventually proved crucial.

Rate for the job

Kitwork deliberately avoided a specific brief, as it wanted to see what ideas the designer had. It did envisage, however, a wide variety of combinations within a basic kitchen cabinet and the designer set out to produce such a design, but suggested a more rational and less complicated approach. Price was not discussed, though the designer aimed at an economic job, and no technical limitations were imposed. In no case was briefing a protracted business.

It is not easy for the designer to fix a fee for his first



Determining the fee (a very complicated problem)

job with a firm, especially a small firm whose expected turnover on the design cannot be large. The Society of Industrial Artists suggests that each member should estimate an hourly rate of pay, based on expected annual profit and adjusted to take account of unproductive time. He should then assess the time the job is likely to take and multiply this figure by the hourly rate. The final sum thus depends partly on the size of his office (ie, on the amount and variety of services he can offer) and partly on what he thinks his experience and ability are worth in terms of profit. The society publishes schedules of average fees which, during the period we are considering, were 50 guineas for a single piece and 100 guineas for a three-piece suite; the furniture schedule is at present being revised.

In all four cases fees and other conditions were agreed at the briefing stage. Three designers either asked for the SIA average rate or for some related fee, being concerned that they should not seek more until they had proved their worth to the firms concerned. The exception was Chairform's designer who charged 50 per cent above the SIA average, reasoning as in the previous paragraph. All the manufacturers agreed to pay the amounts asked for; there was no haggling. When questioned in this enquiry they did say (with the exception of Modmake) that they found the charges rather high, but they did not mind paying them provided they got value for money. In the event one of the 'unsuccessful' firms, Kitwork, paid up without difficulty. There was only one case of difficulty and this is dealt with on page 52.

Relationships put to the test

The procedure was fairly uniform among the four firms. Since each manufacturer lacked experience of this kind of consultancy, the designer tended to initiate the procedure, following correctly, it seems, the code of professional conduct drawn up by the Society of Industrial Artists. Having exchanged letters of contract or engagement he produced rough sketches of his proposals, sometimes in the form of coloured perspective drawings. After the firm had considered them, he discussed them with its senior staff, the number varying from firm to firm, and either accepted modifications they suggested or put forward alternative modifications of his own. At Cabco and Modmake these discussions were informal and very friendly; the firm liked the drawings and made this clear to the designer, trying not to let criticism, when necessary, discourage him. Even in the other two cases objections were minor at this stage (Chairform had two sets of designs to choose from and accepted one with little amendment), but it seems probable that the directors and staff concerned did not realise the full practical implications of the sketches.

After this the designers prepared working drawings and in due course – manufacturers had no delays to complain of – sent them in, together with any necessary production specifications. There was a second round of discussion, this time in more detail and including sales and production staff.

Here the differences between 'successful' and 'un-



A case of mutual misunderstanding

successful' relationships became noticeably sharper. Cabco and Modmake accepted the detailed drawings with unabated enthusiasm and went quickly into prototype after friendly and constructive discussion; they regarded prototype-building as a test of their own, as well as the designer's skill. Both sides co-operated to get the prototype right and to overcome production problems that seemed likely to arise. Both the designers showed that they had sound ideas at shop floor level (one had worked in a furniture factory before becoming a designer).

Requirements misunderstood

The other two firms ran into difficulties at this stage. In Kitwork those who had promoted the project (one director and the sales manager) liked much in the design but had difficulty in pressing it forward, especially in getting a prototype constructed. Their view, in retrospect, is that the designer did not keep to his preliminary drawings and that his design proved difficult to make by their existing methods. It would therefore be costly and difficult to sell. The designer considers, on his experience of successful cabinet designing for other firms, that his design for Kitwork was economical and within the technical competence of the firm as he saw it. He also complains that the firm was slow in producing costings.

The situation at Chairform was similar in many ways. On receiving the working drawings the firm made a prototype of one chair only, which did not tally with the drawings. Chairform called the designer to the factory; in his view the trouble was nothing unusual and he suggested slight adjustments with which the firm seemed satisfied. Five months later the designer wrote (not for the first time) enquiring about progress; in reply the director said his firm thought the design unsuitable – it

would not sell – and asked belatedly if the designer could suggest how it might be “improved” to make it more saleable. When questioned in this survey, the director took the view that the working drawings specified only the outline of the chair, not the method of shaping the frame to the outline, and Chairform found it difficult to make cheaply by the production methods available. Partly because of cost, partly because of appearance, the directors thought it would not sell. As with Kitwork the designer did not agree that the product need be expensive, and he said that the firm did not discuss alternative production methods when the prototype was being built.

Where relations were successful they developed very quickly. The firms put the prototypes into production and commissioned more work from the designers, giving them as much freedom as before. The consultants eventually moved on to a retainer fee or part-time salary and

went from bad to worse. The designer accepted the firm’s last-minute request to “improve” the design, but said this meant a new project – with a new contract and a new fee – after the original fee had been paid in full. The firm argued that, as the development of a prototype chair had not been completed and the other prototypes had not been made, the fee was not payable in full. After some disagreement the two sides reached a compromise figure, but that was the end of the consultancy and of the design. Kitwork’s designer complained among other things that the firm changed his colour scheme and handles without consulting him and the relationship ended abruptly. Response to the prototype from buyers was not encouraging and the firm dropped the project.

What lessons can be learnt?

Four cases do not provide a sufficient basis for sweeping generalisations, but they do point to a number of interesting conclusions, which can be tentatively stated.

1 None of the four firms had a precise idea of what it wanted from the designer. Cabco and Modmake selected their designers by intuition and undertook to trust their intuition and see the new designs through like any other business innovation. The other two firms selected the designers and hoped for the best. They could neither face the consequences of offering a free hand nor define their needs sufficiently to give a clear and binding brief. Both the designers concerned accepted this situation because they realised that it is very hard for a firm employing its first designer to know exactly what it wants. But this meant that they had to try to assess what the firms did want, and hope that this assessment was right or that the firms would be frank, sympathetic and constructive if it was not.

2 All four designers relied on rough sketches to test whether their designs were commercially and aesthetically sound. They took agreement to the sketches to mean that the firms backed the design and would promote it conscientiously. But both Chairform and Kitwork were not able to judge these aspects of the design until they saw the furniture in the round. Only then did they begin to see sales snags. Only then did they begin to take cost and prices seriously. Only then did they start thinking of the sort of modifications that the designer would normally have expected at the rough sketch stage. The designers considered their work nearly done by the time all this happened, though they were prepared to give a reasonable amount of help with production problems.

3 In the two unsuccessful cases – but not in the others – the firms became hesitant and defeatist in the face of problems they were not used to. Had they been able to mobilise help from their designers, things might have ended differently.

4 By this time, however, the two sides lacked the confidence in each other to make such co-operation possible. The firms felt the designers were probably the wrong choice and, without further encouragement, were disinclined to seek their advice on manufacturing problems. The designers saw a cold shoulder behind the months of delay and wanted the firms to show signs of real



gradually came to occupy important positions in the firm, sharing responsibility for design policy, often initiating new developments and, not infrequently, forming close personal ties with one or more directors. The managing directors of both firms became design enthusiasts and were prepared to take big risks and to accept the fact that some designs would be less successful commercially than others.

The designer’s relations with Chairform, however,

interest before committing themselves to last-minute rescue work, which could well take up a lot of time.

5 Fees in themselves caused no difficulty, but misunderstanding as to what they should cover helped to mar the Chairform relationship.

6 Two differences in the situation of designer and client probably affected relationships a good deal. The successful firms were family businesses where two people at the head of the firms took the vital decisions; the others had at least four directors and a management structure in which the taking of decisions was not so straightforward. Again the successful firms used designers who had yet to establish their reputations fully; the other two designers were already well known and had plenty of rewarding work on their hands.

7 Both Chairform and Kitwork have experimented with a second designer since. Chairform's was a consultant, little known compared with the first, who designed a commercially successful dining room suite and an unsuccessful upholstered suite. The firm has now come to the view that upholstery designing requires a good deal of practical knowledge and experience, which can only be got by regular association with the factory. Kitwork has been employing a staff designer for the past 18 months.

Guide to good relations

The broad conclusion seems to be this. Adopting a design policy means for most firms a startling change in the traditional way of doing things – in the techniques of production, in the balance between craft and machine, in production engineering, in sales outlets and policy, even in advertising and public relations. It is a change in the very aim and function of a firm, and the bigger and quicker the change the harder it is to achieve. Time and again the impetus behind innovations has come with a change at board level – an enthusiastic son joining the family business or a new man being brought in specially to revive a flagging concern. But neither Chairform nor Kitwork was so blessed. They were traditionally minded firms which had been struggling to put new wine into old bottles and needed professional help. Once help came, they found themselves with an organisational problem – of adapting design to processes and processes to design – for which they needed additional help.

Giving such help seems to involve a change in the designer's way of doing things, since all four designers assumed the firms to be capable of managing a design policy. What does a designer do when the firm shows it cannot? Does he see an interesting challenge in the situation and does he think that every opportunity should be taken for furthering good design? Or does he fear that the firm may squander his valuable time or harm his professional reputation? These are difficult questions for him to answer.

The only alternative to his help is the provision of specialist advice, either by a design specialist in a firm of management consultants or a management specialist in a firm of general design consultants, or in some other way. A most elaborate managerial procedure has to be worked out in the design of complex engineering pro-

ducts, compared with which the procedure for a chair or a cabinet is simple. Every mass producer of, say, motor cars is continually shooting trouble and refining costs. It should not be difficult to provide a consultant service for furniture makers at reasonable cost.

Finally, a change is implied in the human relations of a firm. Design consultancy is a very intimate form of business relationship and the mutual confidence on which it depends for success is a brittle thing in its early days. Two of the four firms, being family businesses, laid much emphasis on human relations already and gladly made friends of their designers. One director remarked how pleasant it was to have someone interesting to talk to and visit exhibitions with. Both the designers treasured this contact and recognised it as something much more satisfying than a straight commercial relationship. Failure to build such relations in the other two cases seems due to lack of someone at the top of the firm who was both keen on the design project and empowered to see it through, so that he could work wholeheartedly with the designer from start to finish. One of the designers went so far as to say that he believed any new design is doomed to failure unless it has such enthusiastic backing from the top.





USA design for developing people

LAZETTE VAN HOUTEN

The US Government's project to send design teams to under-developed countries might be considered as an astute political move to gain prestige in those countries and strengthen their links with the Western block. The defenders of the scheme, however, would maintain that this is a practical commonsense way of helping the impoverished to help themselves.

Peter-Müller-Munk puts forward this point of view: "Let us evaluate the needs of our allies and the under-developed countries in non-political terms. Obviously our aim is to put them – or keep them – in business. Dollars alone will produce neither

economic stability nor loyalty".

Some critics would claim that at least 10 more years' work will have to be done, and a lot more dollars spent before any concrete results will be established; others question the validity of laying such an emphasis on handicrafts in an industrialised world. The fact remains, however, that this is the only technical aid scheme to under-developed countries to place such an emphasis on design. It is obviously too early yet to make a fair assessment of its success or failure. This article by DESIGN's American correspondent discusses the work that has already been done.

American designers it seems are an indispensable part of the United States Government's foreign aid programme. Recognising that peace time aid to the small under-developed countries of the world must take a different form from that extended to the already industrialised countries of Europe, the State Department has sought out the special talents of industrial designers.

The basic agrarian economy of such countries as Thailand, Korea, Taiwan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Greece and Turkey provides employment for only part of the year. In off-seasons the workers turn to production of traditional crafts, largely for their own use. In the main they are untrained and unskilled. Many of their crafts have deteriorated below the standards that would be acceptable for saleable goods. Many of them feel a deep insecurity about the value of their handicrafts, comparing them unfavourably with machine made objects. As the people live mainly from the scanty production of the land, they are not consumers in the usual sense.

In order to raise the standard of living of these "developing people", as they are known in Washington, by helping them to improve and expand their native crafts, and the products of their home and small industries, a special agency, the International Co-operative Administration (ICA) was set up, and in 1955 contracts with five industrial design firms were signed.

Dave Chapman Inc, Peter Müller-Munk Associates, Smith, Scherr and McDermott, Walter Dorwin Teague Associates and Russel Wright Associates were engaged to survey countries from the Caribbean to the Far East. In addition the ICA engaged Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art for a

project in Israel and Tunisia, and Dr Allan Eaton, an expert in the handcraft field, was engaged to do a survey in Barbados. Although not a part of the ICA programme, the Ford Foundation has undertaken a somewhat similar programme of aid to under-developed nations, engaging Charles Eames for work in India.

The ICA established project priorities for the various countries to which assistance has been given; these are based on their relative importance in the attainment of US objectives and the availability of funds. So far an estimated total of \$1,844,521 has been spent in approximately 25 countries. "We consider it to be of the highest importance", a Government spokesman states, "that the results of this assistance will be reflected in the improvement of the internal economy of the countries involved, as well as possibly being the source of increased foreign exchange."

This aim to raise the standard of living of the co-operating countries is not a simple one. All the designers involved agree that it must be accepted as a long range project, with results coming slowly, and accomplished the hard way.

The designers engaged in the ICA projects are well aware of the challenge not only to their individual firms and personnel, but to the profession of industrial design as a whole. They are being called upon to perform on many levels and in a way not demanded when designing for Western industrialised economies.

The urgency of the job and its magnitude are always before them. In every case the head of the firm has spent considerable time and made many trips to the countries involved. In each case, too, personnel of partner or associate status is

locally in charge. Considering that such projects represent only a fraction of work in any one office and that they pay proportionately little compared with other jobs, the amount of executive time and effort is very high. This is indicative of the importance these firms place on the ICA programme.

According to W. F. Sweeney, chief of the Far East area operations for ICA, these programmes have been enthusiastically received in the participating countries. He points out that skills have been upgraded and productive capacities increased, and that there has also been an expansion of both foreign and domestic markets.

In general the designers also express satisfaction at the amount of success so far experienced although they admit that the handicaps are considerable. Travel and living in these areas are hard, judged by the standards of the Americans involved. Funds are not plentiful. There are cultural and language difficulties. For the people they are attempting to help, age-old beliefs, methods, and attitudes must be re-evaluated, changed or discarded.

But probably the primary difficulty lies in governmental procedure - both of the US Government and the host countries, which is slow, often unwieldy, getting bogged down at a most crucial moment. Such projects are only feasible if planned on a long term basis, and yet contracts are issued for no longer than a 12-month period. There are thus inevitable delays and frustrations due to the necessity for Congressional go-ahead orders.

In the meantime the ICA has set up a programme through a department called the Office For Private Enterprise, which is still so new that no one can foresee its effect on the over-all plan. Headed by a business man, Edwin Arnold, and under the direction of James Silberman, a Government specialist, the programme calls primarily for an emphasis to be placed on industrial development centres which would be established through investment by private enterprise in these under-developed areas. It is hoped that foreign capital can be interested in the development of centres which will utilise power, water, etc, for a combination of a variety of manufacturing concerns. It is conceivable that eventually such centres will include housing and other aspects of community planning. There seems to be no indication that product planning will not be continued as part of this broader based development.

Teague talks to a craftsman.

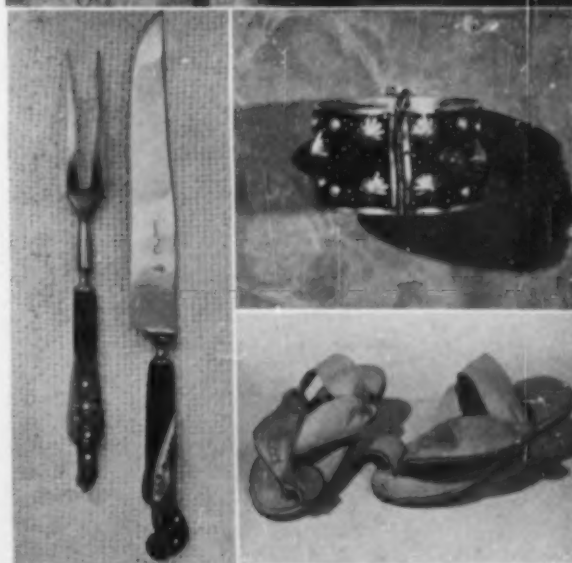
Greece and The Middle East

Walter Dorwin Teague Associates in Greece, the Lebanon and Jordan found the local crafts of a high calibre in design. Therefore Mr Teague felt that no basic design changes were necessary, apart from advice on how to adapt such goods as table linens to Western specifications and traditional knit stockings to such modern use as ski wear.

The Queen's Fund, a Greek governmental agency to help home industries, was already operating when Mr Teague arrived there. The fund provided design and style help, but placed no emphasis on expanding markets for the goods. Mr Teague came to the conclusion that his first efforts must be concentrated on this aspect of the problem. Consequently he engaged Alfred Auerbach Associates, merchandising and advertising specialists, to advise on marketing. An exhibit was arranged and held in New York for 50 retail buyers, merchandise managers and stylists to get their reactions to the saleability of a wide selection of Greek handcrafts. The response was enthusiastic and a programme for production was set up. Mr Teague expects to see a Greek distribution agency established in New York for which his organisation and Mr Auerbach's will act as consultant, and has similar plans for the Lebanon and Jordan.



Cutlery made in the Lebanon.
Silver bracelet - one of the exhibits in a display of Greek handcrafts in New York.
Goat skin sandals made in the Lebanon.

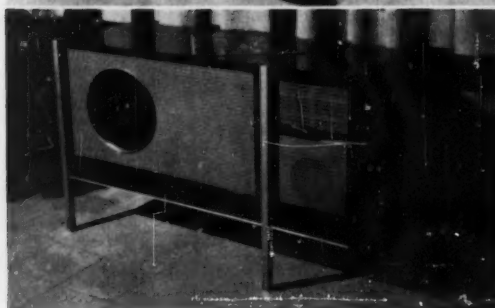
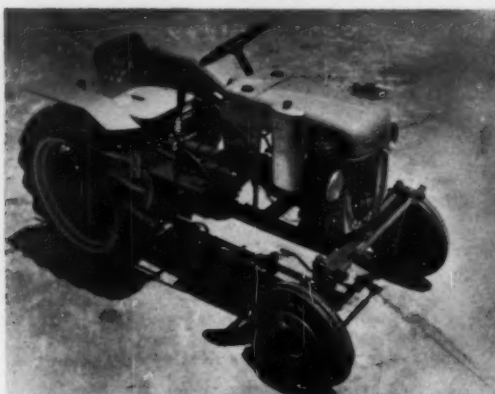




South-East Asia

Russel Wright Associates went directly to commercial sources in the United States to gain opinions on what would sell best. Mr Wright interviewed dozens of retailers prior to his first trip and then collected over 1,500 items from Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Japan and held the *South East Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development* exhibit in New York's Coliseum. Like Mr Teague he found gratifying enthusiasm for much of the merchandise and his office has been successful in arranging distribution and sale of many items ranging from basketry to reproductions of metal and ceramic art pieces.

Mr Wright does not hold with Mr Teague's belief that native designs should not be tampered with. He has done considerable original design where he found both the skills and the materials available. Such designers as Jack Lenor



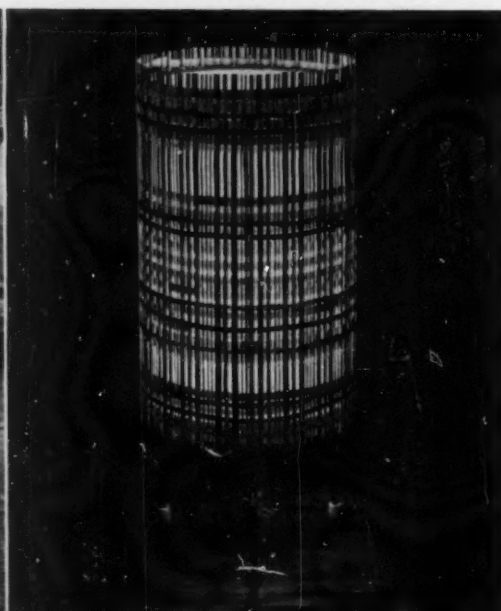
Tractor and hi-fi equipment developed by Peter Müller-Munk Associates and its Israel design office.



Candle stick designed and made in Turkey.

Larson, Ken Vyemura, Ruben Eshkanian, and Klaus Grabe have been engaged not only to restyle but to introduce new designs and new items. In Vietnam a sea grass rug industry has been established which is now exporting regularly and profitably to the United States. In Taiwan a range of bamboo items gives promise of a successful operation. Through Mr Wright's market survey and development department in New York a large export line is at the sample order stage which, if the merchandise conforms to specifications, will represent a really large figure.

Mr Wright has set up a Handicraft Promotion and Production Centre in Taiwan and a Handicraft Development Centre in Saigon in collaboration with that country's Ministry of National Economy where craftsmen are trained and where basic marketing information is given.



Russel Wright prices craft made products in Cambodia. Table lamp designed by the Russel Wright organisation, and made by craftsmen in Vietnam.



Peter Müller-Munk with items sponsored by his organisation in Turkey.

Israel and Turkey

Peter Müller-Munk Associates faced a completely different set of conditions in Israel where comparatively few crafts are found. The project is primarily one of development of industrial products such as refrigerators, heaters, hi-fi equipment as well as packaging. Emphasis is placed on helping the Israelis to produce items for their own consumption thus endeavouring to establish a better balanced trade situation. Mr Müller-Munk sees the opportunity for Israel, the least under-developed country in the ICA programme, to become the Switzerland of the Middle East, using the technical knowledge and skills of its people who have come from European countries.

A product design office has been established in Israel under the joint sponsorship of the Government of Israel and the ICA. The office is under the direction of a Müller-Munk team and is staffed by Israelis. Mr Müller-Munk will eventually relinquish control of the office which at this time is nearly self-sufficient.

In Turkey on the other hand the Müller-Munk office found excellent opportunities for development of native crafts for export and for the tourist trade. This tourist market, incidentally, is an increasingly important one for many of the countries concerned. Mr Müller-Munk is thinking in terms of encouraging such craft toward a small business development. The skills in Turkey, he believes, justify such a programme. A number of co-operatives have been established for the development of this project.

Korea

Smith, Scherr and McDermott also found in Korea a fine craft heritage that had been totally disintegrated due to war. In association with the Republic of Korea and the US Overseas Mission branch of the ICA Washington, DC, the firm has set up a Demonstration Centre in Seoul; the centre does not make goods for direct sale, but displays new items, and demonstrates techniques and designs. Craftsmen, small manufacturers and students are invited there. Problems, facilities and a product programme are discussed. Design prototypes are eventually made at the centre or in the shop of a participant. The product is then priced, photographed, and sent to Smith, Scherr and McDermott's home office in Akron, Ohio, and to New York. In New York, the design goes to the Korea Trade Centre as a sample; the Akron prototype is used for merchandising efforts. United States importers, buyers and wholesalers are checked for reactions and suggestions. When buyer interest is shown in any item it goes back to Korea for production.

The firm reports that an industrial design curriculum in the two leading university design departments and a Korean participant training programme in design and business techniques is under way in order that qualified people will be able to assume responsibilities when Smith, Scherr and McDermott's contract expires.

The firm is also active in public relations assistance both in Seoul and Akron whenever it is needed and requested. It has designed and organised a travelling show in Korea and a pavilion for the US Trade Fairs in New York and Chicago.

Student in the basic design course organised by Smith, Scherr and McDermott at Seoul National University.



Glass decanter designed by Stan Fistic for export and for sale in Korea.

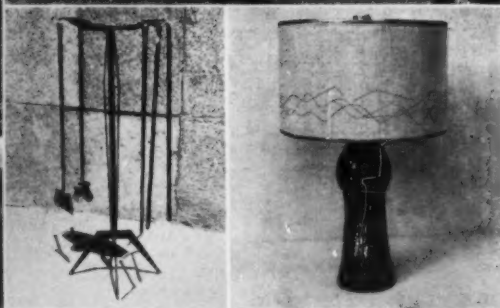




Dave Chapman evaluates handcrafts.



Chair from a modularised range of metal and wood furniture, designed by Sam Maloof and Roy Ginstrom.



Hearth furniture and table lamp designed in the Chapman office and made by Persian craftsmen.

The Middle East

Dave Chapman Inc, through its affiliate Design Research, was called upon by ICA to undertake surveys of a number of countries in widely separated parts of the world from the Caribbean to the Middle East. The design team found, according to executive vice-president William Goldsmith "a surprising overlap of problems common, it seems, to all peoples of nations whose basic economies are rooted in agriculture, craft and small industry activity".

Craftsmen who deprecated their own crafts were engaged in producing bad copies of other people's wares. As in Japan, where the Western room is a mark of distinction in middle-class society, other middle-class groups looked scornfully at goods made in the cottage industries of their own countries. There was, too, in all of the countries an erroneous belief that only cheap goods could compete in the world market and that cheap labour even though correlated with low productivity, could prove this successfully. Consequently Mr Chapman felt that one of the first steps was to re-establish basic cultural values, to uncover and help in the re-instatement of indigenous skills and crafts.

To Iran for instance, where craft traditions exist for the development of a thriving textile production, Mr Chapman dispatched Roy Ginstrom, a specialist in fabric design and weaving, and Frank Carioti, a marketing expert. Together they set up a craft design centre within the existing development centre of the Ministry of Industry and Mines. The pro-

gramme included the training of craftsmen, quality checking, and approval from the production of a sample to its first marketing run, and finally help was given in opening markets. Technical assistance such as improvement of kilns, dyes and glazes, etc, was rendered.

Textiles were only one of more than 50 categories of products developed. Of these products, at least 55 individual items are being included in a brochure for craft manufacturers sponsored by the Ministry of Industry and Mines on a budget established by Iran. Now that the first phase of Mr Chapman's project has ended, this brochure will give the newly trained and organised craftsmen complete specifications of materials used, detail drawings showing fabrication, etc, and photographs of the products.

Less than a year ago Dave Chapman Inc undertook a furniture design programme in Beirut and Teheran in order to train Lebanese and Iranian furniture craftsmen to design and make better furniture than has so far been produced in their countries. The furniture is also used by United States overseas personnel, and a possible export trade is also being considered for the future. Furniture designer Sam Maloof went out to join Mr Ginstrom and together they set up a programme which resulted three months later in the establishment of a model apartment complete with draperies, accessories, etc, as well as a 27-piece furniture line. By now the furniture production will be in full swing.

ICSID executive board



Misha Black, president.



Pierre Vago (France), vice-president.



Count Sigvard Bernadotte (Sweden), vice-president.



Peter Müller-Munk (USA), treasurer and chairman.



Mia Seeger (Germany), secretary.



Enrico Peressuti (Italy), chairman of the 1961 general assembly. Extracts from Mr Peressuti's address to this year's assembly are on page 61.



Paul Reilly, CoID, addressed the assembly on the subject of *An International Definition of Industrial Design*, extracts of which are also on page 61.

Sweden: international assembly for designers

A correspondent reports on a meeting of representatives of design societies from 18 countries.

The first general assembly of the two-year-old International Council of Societies of Industrial Designers (ICSID for short, or 'Iksid' for shorter) was held recently in Stockholm. Over 120 delegates and observers from 18 countries attended, the main function of this first assembly being to ratify the

organisation's draft constitution and to elect a new executive board. The establishment of some kind of international organisation concerned with design had first been raised in 1953 at a congress in Paris by the late Jacques Viénot, his idea being that the various national propaganda bodies should get together to concert their programmes. Although the need for an international council of councils of industrial design was not then – or now – apparent, it seemed to the American Society of Industrial Designers, the British Society of Industrial Artists and the French Institut d'Esthétique Industrielle that there was a case for an international body to represent the various national professional societies and to co-ordinate as far as possible the training and practice of industrial designers. The first tentative meeting of professional societies was accordingly convened in London in June 1957. The support was sufficient to warrant the formal establishment of ICSID with Peter Müller-Munk (USA) as president; Misha Black (UK) and Enrico Peressuti (Italy) as vice-presidents; and Pierre Vago (France) as secretary treasurer. It was clear from the Stockholm meeting that not only is there wide interest among professional designers in the setting up of this first international body, but also that many non-professional propaganda organisations welcome associate membership of ICSID in order to keep in touch with their professional colleagues, to encourage a wider understanding of industrial design and to exchange information and experience.

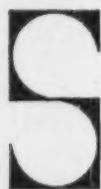
The discussions at the business sessions of the assembly turned mainly on the question of professional and non-professional participation in the affairs of ICSID, some observers feeling that the new organisation may tend to become a sort of international trade union of designers, others taking the broader view that "we are all in this together" and that any steps that can be taken internationally to enhance the role of the designer will benefit general standards of design and vice versa. It is to be hoped that the four Scandinavian Arts and Crafts Societies, which have for so long been leaders in the field of propaganda for good design, will eventually join ICSID as associate members alongside their more recently founded and smaller professional societies, rather than that any separate international organisation for non-professional interests should be set up.

At its closing session the assembly elected a new executive board: president: Misha Black; vice-presidents: Pierre Vago and Count Sigvard Bernadotte (Sweden); secretary: Mia Seeger (Germany); treasurer and chairman: Peter Müller-Munk; co-opted member and chairman of the 1961 general assembly: Enrico Peressuti. The assembly also received with enthusiasm the announcement by Peter Müller-Munk of the generous establishment by Edgar Kaufmann Jr of the Kaufmann International Design Award in memory of Mr Kaufmann's parents. This award of an annual prize of not less than \$10,000 will be granted to an individual or to an organisation "for consistent records of achievement rather than for individual designs or products"; it will be open to designers, teachers, historians, philosophers, critics, but not to architects, engineers, town planners or landscape architects because "healthy international recognition is readily accorded them".

Public features of the ICSID assembly were an international exhibition (mainly photographic) of selected products, each country having been invited to make its own selection; an address by Paul Reilly of the CoID on an international definition of industrial design and a report by Enrico Peressuti on international training of industrial designers (see page 63).



Sweden: a national showroom



The symbol for Svensk Form designed by students of the Konstfackskolan.

Svensk Form, a new permanent exhibition of selected designs, was recently opened in Stockholm.

The recent ICSID general assembly (described on the previous page) was well timed to coincide with two events of great importance for Swedish design – the opening of Svensk Form, the first Swedish Design Centre, and the opening by the King of Sweden of the new building in Valhalla-vägen for the famous Konstfackskolan, the Swedish equivalent of the Royal College of Art.

The Swedish Design Centre, which is housed on the ground floor of the inner courtyard of the dramatic new Konstfackskolan building may be said to be distantly modelled on the Haymarket Centre. It is to be a permanent, changing, selective exhibition of Swedish designs in current production. It will in time be supported by a card-index system similar to the CoID's 'Design Index'. For the present nothing will be sold in the exhibition, though the management is considering the possibility of taking orders. Unlike the British Design Centre no public funds have been put to its establishment, the necessary capital having been found by a small group of progressive firms and mainly ones that might be likely to benefit from the centre's success. To anyone unfamiliar with the public spirited reputation of these firms (prominent among them being AB Nordiska Kompaniet, whose president, Rudolf Kalderen, serves as chairman of Svensk Form) this might appear a point of

criticism. More surprising perhaps to those who know the great contribution that has been made to Sweden's reputation for modern design by the long established Svenska Slöjdföreningen (the Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design), this distinguished body did not take the lead in establishing the new centre although it is well in touch with it in an advisory capacity.

But whoever was behind it the new centre well represents the best of current Swedish practice. Under the energetic direction of Åke Hult, himself head of the Konstfackskolan's department of furniture and interior design and a former director of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Svensk Form is bound to play a prominent part in the next phase of Swedish design development. The design of the exhibition itself, which was entrusted jointly to Åke Hult and Erik Herlöv, the distinguished Danish designer, is an aristocratic model of what the world expects from Sweden – grace, clarity, elegance, imagination, purity of line and form, coupled with an almost virginal chastity of presentation that would perhaps look out of place as near to Piccadilly Circus as is The Design Centre for British Industries. And yet it would be heartening to find in Haymarket as consistently high a standard of selection as is possible in Sweden. It would be encouraging, too, to see proportionately as many British manufacturers employing the talents of our leading designers, for a visitor to Svensk Form must leave with one outstanding impression: the 30-year old marriage between Swedish art and Swedish industry is still happy and fruitful.

Quotes

Industrial design defined

Two papers were given at the recent assembly of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Designers, (see page 59). Extracts from the first, *An International Definition of Industrial Design*, by Paul Reilly, director designate, CoID, are published here:

"... I should start by reading your draft definition of an industrial designer: 'An industrial designer is one who is qualified by training, technical knowledge, experience and visual sensibility to determine the materials, mechanisms, shape, colour, surface finishes and decorations of objects which are reproduced in quantity by industrial processes... The industrial designer may also be concerned with the problems of packaging, advertising, exhibiting and marketing when the resolution of such problems requires visual appreciation in addition to technical knowledge and experience. The designer for craft based industries or trades, where hand processes are used for production is deemed to be an industrial designer when the works produced to his drawings or models are of a commercial nature, are made in batches or otherwise in quantity and are not personal works of the artist craftsman'.

"... I welcome the breadth of that definition for it disposes of the frequent but fruitless argument about the fields of activity that should be open or closed to the industrial designer.

"... No one in this industrial world would deny that the designer for industry should first master his techniques of production, should understand his materials and should be able to see the point of view and speak the language of engineers, accountants, publicists, salesmen or any other of his technical colleagues.

THE DESIGNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

"... The social responsibility of the designer has many facets - responsibility towards his client, towards his market, towards his times and towards himself.

"... But there is more to each of these separate responsibilities than meets the eye. His responsibility towards his client extends beyond producing an acceptable, saleable product; it must be a makeable one allowing for the greatest economy of means and the fullest exploitation of the latest industrial techniques.

"... His responsibility towards his market or his public extends beyond designing something useful, convenient and attractive. A designer must explore not only wants but needs. He should know not only how people use a given object, but how they could use it better were it different. His responsibility towards his times, however, raises more controversial issues. It is at this point that the word taste must be faced, however reactionary that may sound, since taste and times are inseparable - no matter what times.

"... A living designer must, unless otherwise instructed, cater to some extent for the times in which he is living. If he is sensitive to the spirit of his age his work will reflect it. But this in itself cannot ensure a good result.

"... A good designer should therefore count among his mental and spiritual equipment a sense of history, not only a sense of fashion in the ephemeral commercial meaning of the word, but a sense of the unfolding pat-

tern of life and progress.

"... If I were asked to list his most necessary characteristics I would offer the six Ts - Technique, Talent, Taste, Tact, Tenacity and lastly Tongue, for if he cannot explain himself no one else will be able to."

Design training

Enrico Peressutti, chairman of this year's ICSID assembly, read the second paper which reported his investigations into the methods of training industrial designers. Mr Peressutti received replies to a questionnaire from 53 art schools and colleges in 12 countries. Some of his general conclusions are printed here:

"... It is generally felt that the education of an industrial designer should begin after his eighteenth birthday, that he should specialise for a period of from four to five years after having attended a liberal arts school; and, if possible, that he should have received good training in artistic subjects and in the use of primary materials. A more severe control over the admission of students to industrial design schools is considered necessary. These schools should be, if not necessarily at a university level, at least at that of the high school. We have received requests that these schools be better furnished, above all with large laboratories... It is considered highly important for both students and professors to be able to travel... Also, students should visit professional studios with the eventuality that they can serve as apprentices in these studios and in industry.

"... If we should have to decide between different schools, the consensus is (and I personally add my complete and decidedly favourable support) that the liberal arts school is better, because if there is any one field in which a student must plunge deeply it is that of general culture and not that of technique. Technique, as you well know, changes with every new development and swiftly becomes obsolete.

"... We must find a way to unite the profession of industrial design to the most profound and significant spiritual values present in the traditions of various countries and of single communities. It is only in this way, to paraphrase a famous remark, that we will be able to grow a hundred flowers in the same garden, and all of them beautiful. I would therefore reject the idea of a model school and of a model programme to be followed in the same way everywhere."

Eclectic Britain

From an address of John van Koert to the American Furniture Mart (see page 27):

"... The same home furnishings recipe is to be found everywhere in Western Europe. Take two parts Danish furniture, mix with Swedish drapery fabric, garnish with glass from Italy, and set the table with German stainless steel flatware, and light with Japanese lanterns, as if some gigantic Clementine Paddleford had dictated what the menu should be down to the last little accent.

"... Those of us who have been visiting the Triennale in Milan during the last few years have no right to be shocked by this state of affairs because ideas have been increasingly internationalised and most of us, according to our opportunities, have been devout supporters of that nebulous thing, good taste, also entwined with good design.

"... But let the restless not despair, there are lots of that bad old taste in active use in such countries as France and Belgium - and oddly enough, that shiny old maroon brocade stretched over bulging padding is almost a relief from so much good sense!

"... And, in a way, it is good to see that evangelical gleam in the eyes of designers in such countries who are still fighting the revolution, who are still thrilled to be enlisted in the cause of simplicity, still scraping away at

that bad old pretentious ornamentation, and who are anxious to make things exactly like the approved products of their more progressive neighbours.

SHUN THE COSY SQUALOR

"... The health shoe approach is nowhere more apparent than in The Design Centre of the British Council of Industrial Design. The Design Centre is in the hands of some remarkable sincere and dedicated men, not necessarily designers, who are hell-bent on improving the living standards and most certainly the taste of what used to be referred to as the working class and the lower middle class of Britain. Britain is awash with prosperity, the average man has money to spend and his Government wants him to emerge from the quaint and cosy squalor that used to be his lot. The Design Centre is determined to spare him from copying the stuffy and wasteful gentility of the old middle and upper classes; consequently, the Centre is filled with British approximations of sound Danish furniture, Swedish steel, and Italian glass - all made in Britain with genuine British names, those of manufacturers and designers, attached.

"... In London, design officials are going in not only for visual uplift but they are using the Centre as a weapon for budging British manufacturers out of their ingrained habits... Many of the designers I have talked with recently are happily supporting the community of design, consider it an inevitable stage of development, and are gaining a sense of professional security not easily arrived at in many parts of Europe.

"... British design is still highly compartmentalised, training is narrow and deep, and there are only a handful of designers who consider themselves industrial designers and, as such, are prepared to tackle anything. This kind of versatility is looked on as a kind of American phenomenon. Many bright young designers in England are eager to practise design more broadly and they are acutely aware of the repidity and eclecticism sponsored by The Design Centre. There is also an awareness that during the last 20 or 30 years Britain has been on the sidelines while the Scandinavian-Italian-American axis was developing.

HYBRIDS TO COME

"... It is quite clear that in the United States some sort of counter-revolution is taking place. Europeans are full of disbelief, horror-struck by what seems to them retrogression, if not an outright moral lapse, especially when the great design truths widely accepted in this country after the war are only now being accepted at a popular level in parts of Europe.

"... In Europe there are not the gradations of taste, in points of view, and in sophistication so apparent at such a market as this. During the past few seasons it has been fashionable to moan about the confusion, the conflict of trends, the agonising variety in the American home furnishings markets. While it may be wasteful and altogether too phrenetic, this weedy garden of ours is producing new hybrids, new varieties, and many promises of better things.

"... For want of a better term, let us say that this is a period of growing romanticism in America and most difficult to explain to Europeans. The increasing interest in period styles and derivations therefrom may not be appropriate to a great industrial nation while our fascination with alien cultures, such as that of the Japanese, may appear gauche to the more temperate European; nevertheless, this is an actual, measurable condition... We are doing our best to produce the one of a kind look by mass production methods. We want relief from predictability whereas the European is celebrating with inexpensive, new, readily available mass produced articles... But in this welter of goods there is still a handsome market in America for many of the thoughtfully produced designs of Europe."



Race seating, now specified by many universities, is here shown in the new Medical School, University of Liverpool (architects: Weightman & Bullen)

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'The Cockerel', a poster designed for London Transport by 'Victoria'. It is one of the series of full colour prints of famous London Transport posters, which includes the work of Edward Bawden, R.A., John Minton, E. McKnight Kauffer, and many others. The average size of the prints is 6" x 5". They can be obtained, price 1s. each (postage 3d.) from the Publicity Officer, London Transport, Griffith House, 280 Marylebone Road, London, N.W.1.



Miscellany

New built-in cooker

The new Tricity *Built-In* cooker is composed of two units – an integrated oven, grill and hot cupboard unit, 1, with its own set of control switches, and a surface unit with four hot plates, 2. The hot plate switches are mounted in a separate box, and may be installed in the front of the kitchen cabinet or counter. Two experimental models were shown at the *Ideal Home Exhibition* at Olympia this year, one with the grill in the oven, US style, and one with the grill in the hot cupboard. Popular comment overwhelmingly favoured the latter version and it has been adopted for the production model.

The design is intended to serve the market for high quality fitted kitchens, and the maker anticipates that some of the sales will be through kitchen furniture manufacturers as well as through architects, builders and normal retail outlets. In view of the type of household which is likely to use it the cooker has been designed to serve six to eight persons. At 3,600 cu inches capacity the oven is the largest marketed in Britain and will take a 36-lb turkey. The grill will toast six slices of bread simultaneously.

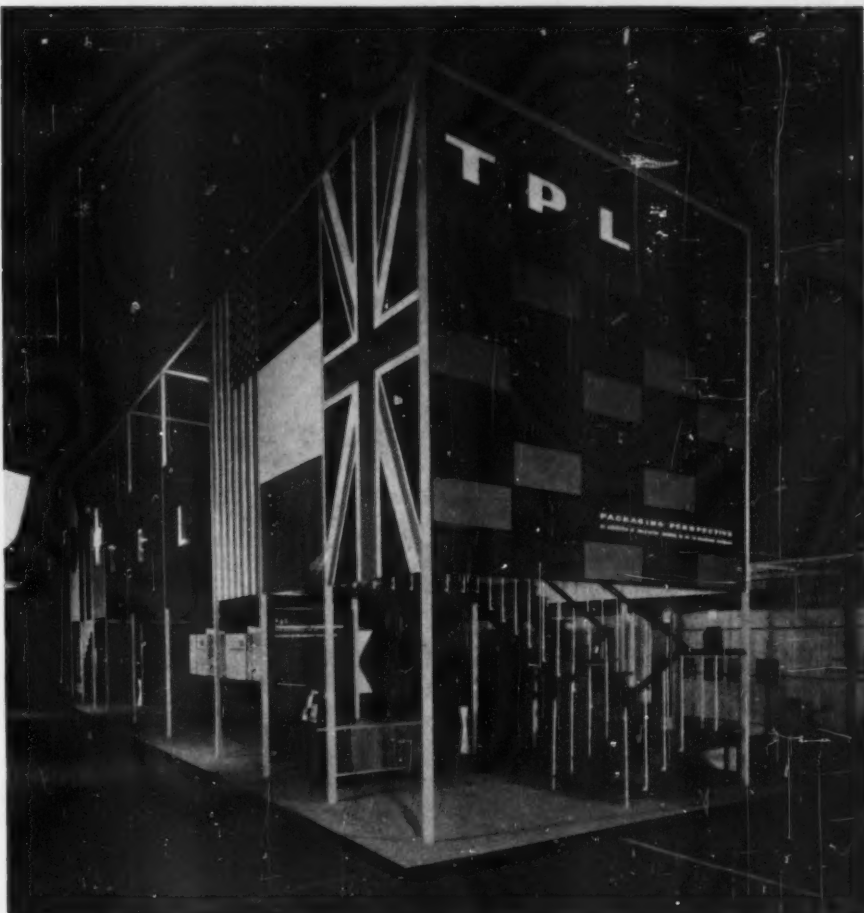
The oven, developed from the earlier and popular *Marquis*, has a side opening door, inner glass door, and interior light. The exterior of the oven and grill unit is finished in white or ivory enamel with stainless steel trim. The fascia behind the switches is of ribbed aluminium, anodised blue or pink, recessed in a white or ivory picture frame. This has a distinctly tinsel effect, whereas the oven and hot cupboard interiors and the pans are finished in the traditional mottled grey, which looks curiously old fashioned in contrast.

The surface unit is finished in white or ivory vitreous enamel. The front of the switch box is decorated with an anodised textured aluminium plate similar to that on the oven control panel.

The design has been skilfully arranged to provide ideal conditions for user convenience and ease of installation. When installed at the recommended height, the bottom of the oven is level with the adjacent working top, while the centres of the three switches – oven thermostat, automatic timer (with minute ringing timer incorporated), and grill heater control – are at eye level for a woman of normal stature. The hot cupboard floor is about 12 inches lower than the oven floor, and the grill pan can thus be slid out and in without bending either back or elbow. Ease of cleaning has been well considered in the design of the surface unit. Overspill is collected in removable spillage cups. Installation is particularly easy. The two units drop into plain rectangular holes and are supported on bearer rails supplied with the cooker for fitting into the housings. A plastics sealing strip closes the gap around the edge of the hot plate hob, and the stainless steel trims close the gap around the oven unit, producing an immaculate finish.

Inevitably, because this is a new venture, the cooker is expensive (£55 for the oven and grill unit and £40 for the surface unit). However, its size and the quality of most of the fittings would seem to be giving value for money. The cooker was designed by a Tricity design team in consultation with E. G. M. Wilkes of Wilkes & Ashmore.

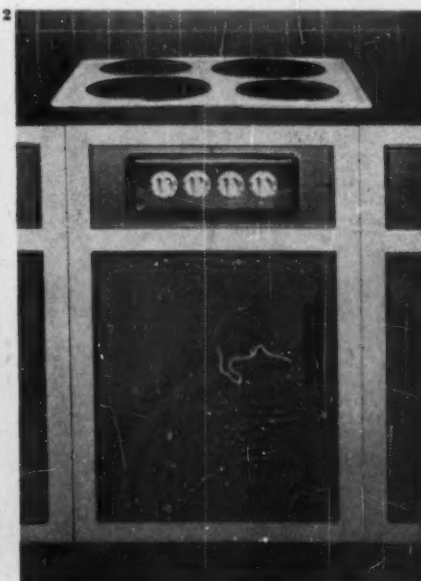
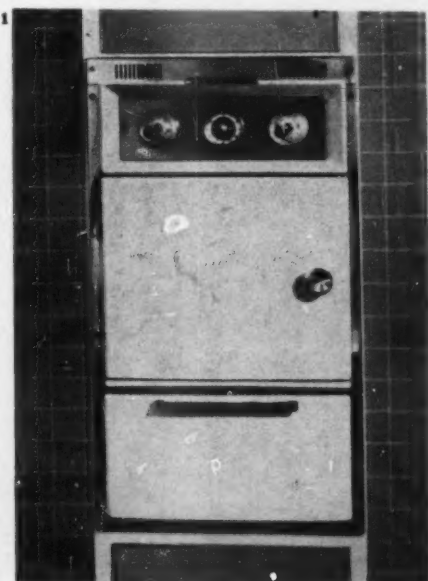
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Prestige exhibit

The stand for Transparent Paper Ltd at the recent *International Packaging Exhibition*. On the ground floor were showcases for specially commissioned work by six well known designers (DESIGN 131/71), whose national flags provide decorative motifs for the superstructure.

Two staircases led to the first floor containing offices, display room for the firm's current products and an Espresso bar. The stand was designed by W. M. de Majo; the general contractor was Osters & Fleming Ltd, and the electrical contractor was C. P. Electrical Ltd.



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MISCELLANY

Street lighting competition

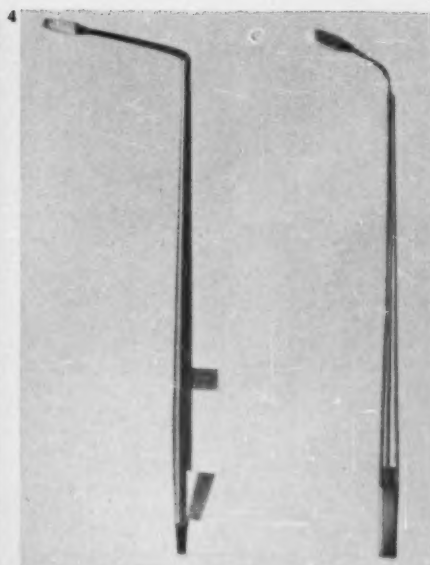
The Aluminium Development Association has announced the results of the competition it organised recently for the design of a street lighting column. Competitors were asked to submit designs for either a 25-ft column for Group A trunk roads, or a 15-ft column for Group B non-trunk road lighting. Appearance, economy of construction, and the advantages of aluminium were to be taken into account.

The first prize, 3 and 5, was awarded to Jack Howe, consultant designer to the AEI Lamp & Lighting Co Ltd, in conjunction with Reynolds TI Aluminium Ltd; and J. B. Dwight, member of the Civil Engineering Department, University of Birmingham. Mr Howe and Mr Dwight submitted designs for both 15-ft and 25-ft columns. In both cases the columns are fabricated in channel extrusions with 60° inclined flanges. The aluminium extrusions are cut diagonally and interlocked, and the joints are bonded by an epoxy resin. The assessors praised the slim dimensions of both columns: in the 15-ft design, 5, the base width measured on one face is 6·7 inches and 9 inches on the 25-ft column.

The second and third prizes were divided between F. J. B. Rowley, a student of the College of Art and Industrial Design, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and S. L. Devlin, student at the Royal College of Art. Mr Rowley's entry, 4, left, is a composite 25-ft column which has a precast reinforced concrete base with a socket designed to receive the end of the aluminium shaft. The lower section of the column is an alloy casting and the upper section is in pressed sheet. The lantern arm is also a casting and carries an Atlas Alpha 1 sodium lantern. Mr Devlin's design, 4, right, is for a 25-ft tapered column with three tube members; the base is enclosed by three sheet panels with welded joints.

The assessors of the competition were Lionel Brett, Professor Sir Alfred Pugsley, and Sir Gordon Russell, director, CoID. In their report they write: "While it had been hoped that the competition would encourage groups of both architects and engineers, it was apparent to us that most of the entries were either the work of architects or students having little knowledge of engineering, or of engineers with little aesthetic training".

The assessors also reported that some of the entries failed because of their excessive cost or weight, and that very few of the designs exploited the special characteristics of aluminium alloys. They felt, when they had examined all the submissions that "team work between specialists is essential if designs are to be completely practical to make and really distinguished to look at". When they had selected the first prize, they found that it had in fact been submitted by a design team incorporating manufacturer, architect, and engineer.





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NEWS

PEOPLE

Ideals for glass

Although Ronald Stennett-Willson, 43, is probably one of this country's leading glass designers, he has designed very little glass for British firms. His range for Lemington Glass Works, RIGHT, is a new departure for him, and may well mark the beginning of a new development within the British glass industry.

Mr Stennett-Willson was one of the first importers of Swedish glass in the 'thirties; he describes his efforts at that time to sell the simple Swedish designs to a market saturated with cheap machine made glass and the decorative cut glass in the British tradition as "heart breaking". However, he did make some progress, and after the war began to import more consistently. In 1951 he joined J. Wuidart & Co Ltd, one of the oldest importers of pottery and glass in this country, and then began to establish stronger links with Scandinavian firms, in particular with the Swedish firms Orrefors and Rörstrand, manufacturing glass and pottery respectively.

He persuaded the Swedish manufacturers to adapt their designs to the requirements of the British market,



R. Stennett-Willson

and he himself has designed ranges to be made in Sweden and sold in this country. Several of the most popular and well known Swedish ranges in this country were in fact designed by him - some more than 10 years ago.

He believes that this glassware has filled an obvious need on the British market for well designed glass in the medium price range, and that it has to some extent filled the gap which still exists in this country between decorated glassware and the machine made ranges by providing good quality glasses for everyday use. He feels, however, that there is still a vast untapped market for glass of this nature, for use in hotels, schools and offices, as well as in the home.

However, until he designed the new glassware for Lemington all Mr Stennett-Willson's designs, even those for British clients (notably the Gilbey glasses DESIGN 97/43) were made in Sweden. He has always felt that British firms have the capacity to produce simple designs in low priced hand blown glass, and he is confident that the Lemington experiment will prove this.

The firm, with its factory in Newcastle-on-Tyne, has made glass since 1787, but this is its first venture into table glass. Mr Stennett-Willson guided the glass blowers into the different techniques of blowing table glass; the use of simple glass blowing keeps the price down, and the designs have a vigorous quality that avoids the artificiality of some hand made products. So far Mr Stennett-Willson has designed two ranges - the tumblers, and a set of sherry glasses. He also designed the packs for the glasses, since he recognises the import-



Tumblers designed by R. Stennett-Willson (see *Ideals for Glass*).

ance of packaging as a sales aid, especially to export markets.

The manufacturer reports that the new designs are selling well and are being exported to the United States and the Commonwealth countries. Mr Stennett-Willson believes that the firm has the capacity and skill to become one of the leading glass manufacturers in the world; he hopes that the two new ranges will mark the beginning of an ambitious new venture that will put modern British glass design on the map again.

Mr Stennett-Willson describes himself as a salesman - he had no design training, but began to design glass to fill what he felt was an obvious gap on the market. He believes that being a salesman is the finest training for a designer. He claims that he has learned to accept and make the best of compromise; he has in fact pioneered a new idea of glass design in this country, and helped to create a demand for quality in glass which hardly existed before the war.

Japanese visitor

Isamu Kenmochi, one of the group of designers who started the new movement in Japan shortly after the war (DESIGN 130/52-57), visited The Design Centre recently. He was impressed by the products on show, and looked forward to the day when his Government would sponsor a similar display.

Mr Kenmochi is a member of the selection committee which awards the Japanese good design label. He is also a free-lance designer (he has recently spent some time in America), and teaches at both the Tama College of Fine Art and Nippon University.

New free-lance

M. O. Rowlands, who formerly headed Ekco Plastics Ltd's industrial design department has resigned in order to concentrate on free-lance work. He will remain a consultant designer to the firm. Mr Rowlands designed the baby bath which was awarded a CoID Design of the Year in 1958 (DESIGN 114/27).

Design team changes

Brian Woods, for some years in the design team at Murphy Radio Ltd, under A. F. Thwaites, is now to join Radio & Allied Industries Ltd. He will work under Edward Dunstall, who is in charge of the design department.

CORRECTION

Rand show

We regret that in the article on the first United King-

dom pavilion at the Rand Easter Show in Johannesburg (DESIGN 129/56-57), the details of the displays inside the pavilion were given incorrectly. The theme of the whole pavilion was *This Atomic Age*. Within this there were three separate exhibits. In the centre of the ground floor the Board of Trade, in conjunction with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, staged a display entitled *Power from the Atom*. Round this was a display *Power for Progress* organised by the Southern Africa Overseas Committee of the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers Association, and itself divided into three sections: *Power from the Earth*, *Power from Water* and *Power from the Atom*. The third exhibit, of scientific instruments and subsidiary equipment, on the mezzanine floor, was organised by the Electronics and Allied Industries Section of the British Manufacturers and Representatives Association of South Africa. This exhibit, which was criticised by the author, was wrongly attributed to BEAMA.

EDITOR

OBITUARY

Paolo Venini

Paolo Venini was a maestro in the world of glass and a great human in the world of men. As an artist and conductor of artists working in glass, his approach was ideal. He was always progressive, always creative, but he always based his designs and experiments on the traditional technique of Murano and on the brittle qualities of his chosen material - glass.

When Venini first came to Venice as a young Milanese law student and soldier during the first World War he was captured by the city and its old decaying glass industry. He returned as soon as possible to become a



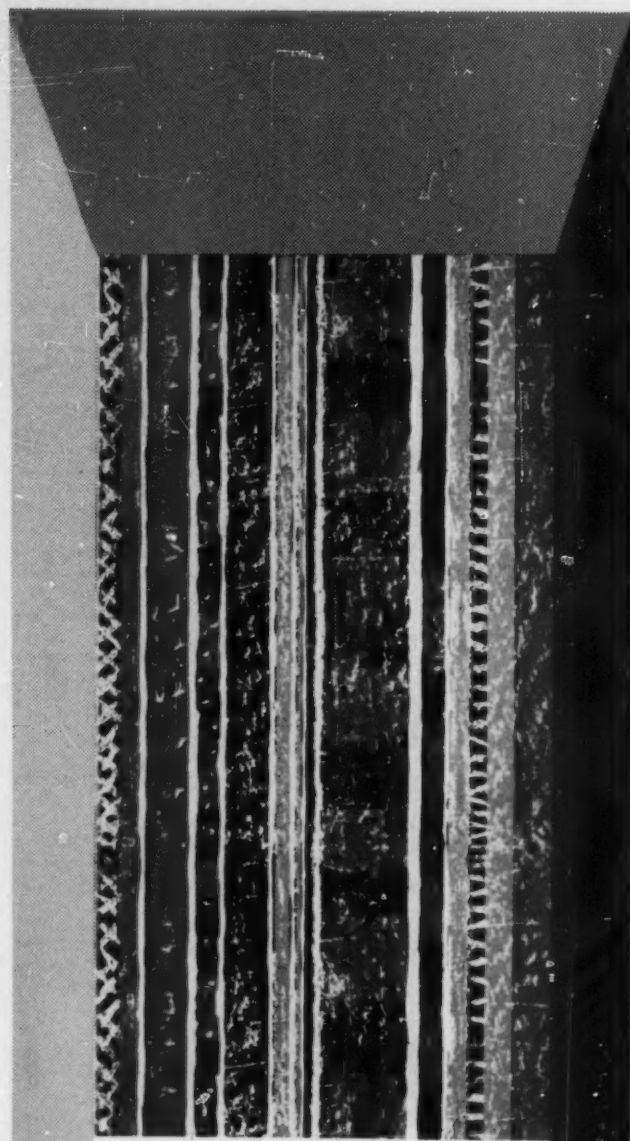
Paolo Venini

full blooded Venetian, and it was a great joy to him when he later learned that some of his forefathers originated in the province he had returned to.

At this time the glass industry in Murano was producing cheap, dead and uninspired designs, but it still had its fine traditions and techniques. It was on these traditions that Venini built when, in the early 'twenties, he started the work in Murano that was to make his name world famous and influence glass making everywhere.

In 1925 he had his first great public performance at the world fair in Paris - at the same time that Orrefors also gained its first international recognition. Venini and Orrefors were, especially after the second World War, to have exhibitions together several times. The casual, colourful playing of the Italian mind, which refused to appear solemn but was in fact serious, and the strict, almost classic Swedish correctness would, of course, supplement each other wonderfully. Artistically

continued on page 69



Stucco Stripe
PALLADIO 3

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NEWS

and personally, Paolo Venini must have had some of his greatest successes in Scandinavia – so perhaps it was fitting his last exhibition was at Artek in Helsinki.

Among Venini's gifts was a great ability to work with other artists – and inspire them to become part of his artistic image whether they worked in America, Sweden or Italy.

Venini was a gentle man. My wife describes our first visit to him in 1950 at the factory in Murano. "We had no language in common. Nor were words necessary as his charming droll face with its warm brown eyes pantomimed the clowns the glass blowers were making. He would pick up something, idly touch it and pass it on to me. He sensed and sympathised with every change of the human mood."

P. E. STEMANN

REPORTS

Safety standards and consumer protection

Following a meeting of the committee on consumer protection (DESIGN 129/63), the chairman, J. T. Molony, issued the following statement: "We have decided that the question of safety standards (affecting as it does the life and limb of the consumer, and not merely his pocket) must be given an early place in our programme. It has been suggested to us that certain products give rise to undue risks which could reasonably be avoided. Electrical appliances and fittings; oil-burning heaters; toys; nursery equipment; highly flammable clothing materials; poisonous or corrosive substances in domestic use (including certain paints and fire-extinguisher fluids); unstable pots, pans and crockery; and plastic bags and bibs are among the goods which have been mentioned to us. It has variously been proposed that the alleged dangers of these articles should be removed by the evolution or modification of safety standards either for voluntary observance or for statutory enforcement, by the marking of suitably tested goods, by warning labels, by further research, or even in certain cases by a total prohibition of sale.

"We ask that anyone wishing to inform us as to the frequency and severity of accidents attributed to such products, to make observations for or against the principle of further control in respect of any product, to propose or oppose any particular method of control, to suggest other products for consideration, or to record an interest in the subject, should do so in writing not later than December 14. Thereafter we shall examine the evidence received, and invite such further written or oral evidence as seems to us useful, before formulating our recommendations."

Letters should be addressed to the Secretary, S. W. T. Mitchelmore, Board of Trade, Horse Guards Avenue, London SW1.

Teaching by TV

The Dave Chapman industrial design office in Chicago is to carry out a study of classroom facilities for teaching by television. This project has been instigated by the Educational Facilities Laboratories Inc which is a non-profit making corporation established by the Ford Foundation. The Dave Chapman group's study will include a review of current facilities, equipment and educational practice relating to the use of television in US schools; a design plan to solve the physical problems of television in the classroom (this will serve as a guide to educationists, architectural planners and equipment suppliers in forecasting future requirements of the

school). The organisation will also recommend design solutions to existing problems – i.e. television set glare, school furniture needs, acoustical problems, classroom ventilation, etc. and will seek ways to adapt current facilities and equipment to gain the greatest immediate advantages from the use of television in the classroom.

At the conclusion of the study (probably late in 1960) the findings and recommendations of the Chapman study group will be published by EFL.

In touch with USSR

The Pergamon Institute, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford, has recently issued an announcement of its services. The institute is a non-profit making organisation; it was set up in 1957 "for the purpose of making available to English-speaking scientists, doctors and engineers . . . the results of scientific, technological and medical research and development in the Soviet Union and other countries in the Soviet orbit". It can now supply specialist translations of Russian scientific, technical and medical publications, etc. abstracts and extracts from the Soviet press, and copies or translations of Soviet patents.

Label on TV

Thousands of television viewers all over the country have been shown The Design Centre label, right, in four programmes dealing with the work of the Centre and the CoID. These programmes have helped to remind the shopper that the label means that a product has been selected for display in The Design Centre and is therefore designed to look good and to do its job efficiently. More and more firms whose products have been chosen for display and are now in 'Design Index' are applying for this well-publicised label. At the moment nearly 400 firms have ordered just under seven million labels. Although many of these firms are manufacturers of kitchen equipment and furniture, labels are in fact shown on 17 types of product, from household linen to motor cycles, so the shopper is constantly reminded of the wide range of goods eligible for exhibition in The Design Centre.

EXHIBITIONS

Liverpool display centre

Preliminary plans have been announced to establish a display centre for artists, designers and craftsmen in Liverpool. The main objects of the centre would be "to promote the highest quality of design and craftsmanship in all things designed and made for the furnishing and embellishment of buildings"; to "encourage the employment of skilled artists, designers and craftsmen for the decoration of buildings" and to "maintain a constant display of the finest and most characteristic work of designers and craftsmen . . . in everything outside the field of mass-produced industrial design".

A panel of judges will also be appointed to maintain the standard of design and craftsmanship in all the exhibits accepted for display or sale. The executive committee, under the chairmanship of Professor R. Gardner-Medwin of the Liverpool School of Architecture, would be pleased to hear from any person or organisation willing to support the project.

At home . . .

International Automatic Vending Exhibition, Royal Horticultural Hall, Feb 15 – 18.

Engineering Materials and Design Exhibition, Earls



The Design Centre label being televised for the ABC programme What's in Store (see Label on TV).

Court, Feb 22 – 26.

Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, March 1 – 26.

The Production Exhibition, Olympia, April 25 – 30.

. . . and abroad

MILAN, *International Samples Fair*, April 12 – 27 (apply Dr V. Schiazzano, 31 Old Burlington Street, WC2).

LEIPZIG, *International Spring Fair*, Feb 28 – March 8 (Leipzig Fair Agency, 39 St James's Place, SW1).

LYONS, *International Trade Fair*, March 12 – 21 (Robert Brandon and Partners Ltd, 47 Albemarle Street, W1).

VIENNA, *International Spring Trade Fair*, March 13 – 20 (British Austrian Chamber of Commerce Inc, 29 Dorset Square, W1).

BASLE, *Swiss Industries Fair*, April 23 – May 5 (Swiss Embassy, 18 Montagu Place, Bryanston Square, W1).

Christmas packs

A display of packaged products suitable for Christmas gift packs will be on show at the Packaging Centre, 50 Poland Street, W1 until December 24.

COMPETITIONS

Ascot cups

The Goldsmiths' Company has announced details of a competition for the design of three Ascot cups – the

continued on page 71



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NEWS

Gold Cup, the Queen's Vase, and the Royal Hunt Cup. The Royal Arms must be included in the design for each cup, and should not be varied from the prescribed style. A sum of £500 has been provided for prizes, and designs should reach the clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company at Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane, London EC2 before January 13 1960. Further details are available from the Goldsmiths' Company.

Car body work

The Institute of British Carriage and Automobile Manufacturers has announced details of its 1960 series of *Drawing and Handicraft Competitions*. The last date for receipt of entries is May 21 1960; entry forms and full particulars are available from the Secretary, The Institute of British Carriage and Automobile Manufacturers, 50 Pall Mall, London, SW1.

MISCELLANEOUS

Towards an integrated partition system

The partitioning system designed by Robert and Roger Nicholson for The Wall Paper Manufacturers' showrooms and offices (DESIGN 128/36-37) is now being produced in a commercial version by Holland & Hannen and Cubitts (Great Britain) Ltd.

Basically the system, called the *Cunic* partitioning system, and its method of erection remain the same, though a slightly smaller module is used, the uprights being at 40-inch centres instead of 42 inches. The ex-



Storage units in the Cunic range.

truded aluminium uprights are not anodised in the commercial range as they were in the WPM showroom and this will considerably reduce the cost. Also a simpler ceiling grid without the diagonal bracing members is an improvement. A wide variety of infilling panels is available. Perhaps the most interesting development is the introduction of shelving and storage cabinets as an integral part of the system. The illustration, ABOVE, shows a typical example of those at present available. Others will be added from time to time. The partitioning itself costs about £5-£6 per ft run.

LETTERS

Coded addresses

The GPO launched the world's first experiment with postal address codes in Norwich recently. The postal code for the Norwich district will take the form of the three letters NOR, followed by two figures and a letter to represent a street, a village or a firm, etc. Norwich has been chosen for the experiment because there are several of the new letter sorting machines now in use there (DESIGN 123/41-44).

US link-up

The Kenwood Manufacturing Co Ltd has recently signed an agreement with the Norge division of the American company of Borg Warner to produce Norge's electrical and catering appliances in this country.

Removal

The new G-Plan Gallery for showing furniture by E. Gomme Ltd has been opened at 19-29 St George Street, London.

LETTERS to the Editor

Motorways: letter forms for road signs

SIR: I was disappointed that none of those taking part in the discussion on the Preston motorway signs (DESIGN 129/28-32) paid serious attention to the advantages of adopting a letter form for road signs which is in common international use. Yet this seems to me to be the great merit of Jock Kinneir's solution. He has taken a style of lettering which successfully guides millions of motorists in the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and many other countries, applied it in Lancashire with taste and skill, and subtly improved upon it in the process. Of course further tests are desirable, but ought we not also to investigate fully the reasons which have, in the past, persuaded so many countries to adopt basically similar solutions? In this matter, we are not starting from scratch. Britain's motorways are very late starters and this situation has only one advantage - it gives us a chance to learn from the experience of others. No experiments can be conclusive and, indeed, one suspects that only a result which confirmed their prejudices would be accepted by some of the critics of the Preston motorway signs.

It must also not be overlooked that the letter form adopted must be, not only easy to read, but also easy to paint or apply to a road sign. Painting David Kindersley's quaintly rustic letter forms would be - in every sense - 'the devil's own job'.

As a nation we have long proved our eccentricity by continuing to drive on the left and by insisting, where traffic signs are concerned, on flights of prose in preference to those simple, efficient and internationally understood symbols which effectively guide the European motorist. But need we assume that these strange habits have produced a degree of physiological abnormality that requires a style of signposting wholly different from that adopted by so many other countries?

HERBERT SPENCER
26 Blomfield Road
London W9

Motorways: counting the cost

SIR: When, oh when, are we as a nation going to begin to be prepared to pay a little extra for what is more pleasant to look at? In his summing up of the discussion



PVC film

British Green Ltd has recently introduced an unplasticised PVC compound, suitable for the manufacture of clear film by blow extrusion processes. The film can be used for packaging; the cost is said to compare favourably with that of other thermoplastic films, and conventional heat-sealing methods can be used to enclose merchandise. The illustration shows the film being blow extruded.

on road signs organised by DESIGN, Mr Whitney Straight is said to have expressed the feelings of the majority when he said "the new signs are so pleasing to look at compared with what there has been in the past that we must be grateful for that". And yet consideration of cost and 'what would happen down the line' seem to carry more weight than the will to have only the best.

By all means let there be more tests; but if the beautifully designed and clear signs of Mr Kinneir are proved to be at least as practical as any others (and no other comparable solution has yet been shown to have been made), then let us be prepared to pay for them. Heaven knows that our various Ministries are backward enough in these matters (vide the Chiswick flyover and the proposed new by-pass bridge at Staines). However the London County Council has demonstrated over the past three decades that a public body in this country can be vigorous and progressive.

AIDRON DUCKWORTH
81 Stile Hall Gardens
London W4

Architectural advice for the farmer

SIR: Country people will salute your brave attempt in the article *Farm Buildings* (DESIGN 131/30-38) to do something constructive about the standard of design of prefabricated farm buildings, which are becoming a serious threat to some of our best landscapes.

I think it would have been interesting if the article

continued on page 73



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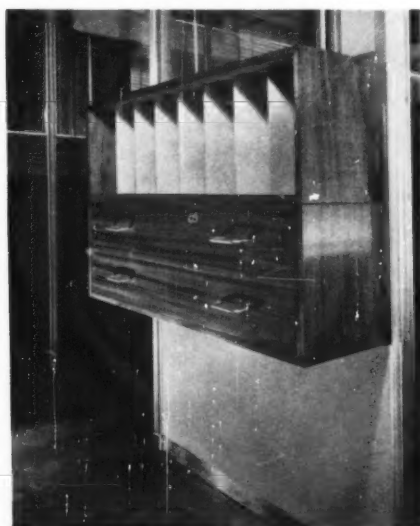
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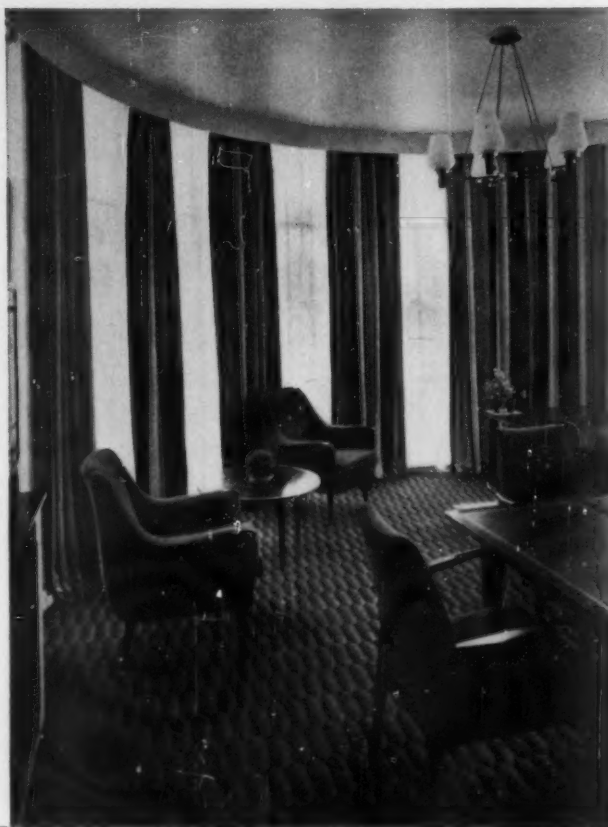
continued on page 73

Chairman's Office by **Ian Henderson**

This luxurious and dignified office has been planned, redecorated and furnished by Ian Henderson. The room contains a small conference table, together with a 5' 6" desk, a glazed built-in bookcase (8' 0") with cupboard under, etc. The secretary's room adjoining is in a similar style. Specialists in complete office and domestic interiors, including panelling, fitments, fine carpets and beautiful textiles. Furnishing schemes carried out to the requirements of architects and interior designers, or to Ian Henderson's own design.

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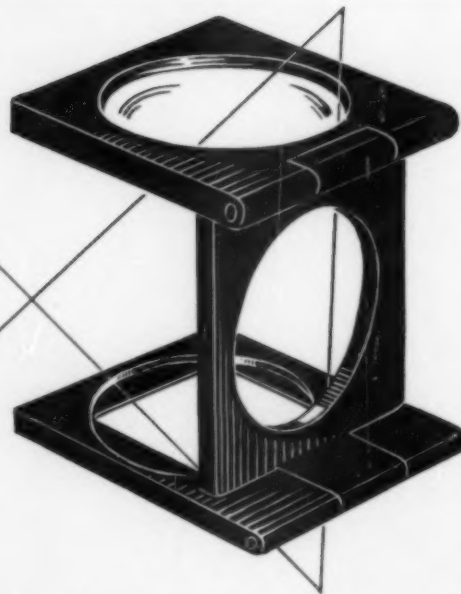


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LETTERS

had put more fully the case for and against planning control. It is certainly arguable, I think, that the lack of control over farm buildings has done infinitely more scenic damage than would have occurred if there had been no control in suburbia, and when one speaks of this control one has to remember that about 90 per cent of planning applications are passed without comment.

One cannot go fully into the arguments about aesthetic control in a letter such as this, but I think I am right in saying that at the moment the official attitude of the RIBA and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England is that while there is a case for relaxations elsewhere there is an equal case for farm buildings above a certain size, and particularly broiler houses, to be brought under control.

It is perfectly true that there have been some cases of inexcusable abuse of planning control, but the number of cases where it has prevented some visual disaster is infinitely greater.

The author complains that the farmer cannot easily obtain advice from an architect. The average farmer of course avoids architects like the plague, just as he avoids other professional men like lawyers and accountants; but if he should want some advice on how to group his buildings in a rational and decent way he only has to telephone his local Agricultural Executive Committee or society of architects and any local architect would be glad to spend a couple of hours with him for £5 5s!

LIONEL BRETT
Watlington Park
Oxford

Nothing new in design?

SIR: The review of the *Designs of the Year 1959* (DESIGN 126/42), explains the principles of selection with clarity, but the choice of one of the designs reveals the care which is needed in applying these principles.

The *Swoe*, made by Wilkinson Sword Ltd was commended "as a new design in a field where tradition is seldom broken". Although I am grateful to the manufacturer for making readily available this version of the single sided hoe, it is hardly a novel tool.

The single sided hoe was, I believe, invented in the nineteenth century by a rose growing rector of the parish of Sproughton in Suffolk. The Sproughton hoe, identical in principle to the *Swoe* is illustrated by Bertram Park in his book *Roses*. Until the last war it could be bought in Ipswich and I have been interested to compare my 20 year old Sproughton hoe with the more modern *Swoe*.

For straightforward work the *Swoe* is as good as the older design but the real superiority of the single sided tool shows up when working between plants. It is then that the lighter and better balanced Sproughton hoe with an old fashioned wooden handle shows its advantage. A lighter blade with a light alloy handle would probably improve the *Swoe* for more intricate work.

Bearing in mind its lack of basic novelty should the *Swoe* have been selected as one of the *Designs of the Year*? Has it deprived some more original design of this coveted award?

H. B. SPALDING
Whitegate House
Whitegate
Cheshire

EDITOR: We asked Wilkinson Sword Ltd and Hulme Chadwick, who designed the *Swoe* in collaboration with

BOOKS



Christmas card

Miro designed one of the Christmas cards in this year's UNICEF Save the Children range.

the firm, to comment. A representative of Wilkinson Sword writes: "A single sided tool to do hoeing we admit is not novel, and has never been claimed so by us. The *Swoe* is novel, and swoeing does much more in creating the perfect tilth, in our opinion, than any other tool. The head design is unique and so is the handle. The correct balance for easy use has been carefully designed into the whole tool."

Hulme Chadwick writes: "In the nineteenth century, local blacksmiths up and down the country made garden tools to suit the individual client or the locality. Hundreds of such tools were made, some are still possibly being forged, and I think the Sproughton hoe comes into this category. Always appreciating that there is nothing basically new in design, I venture to suggest that while the *Swoe* might look like the Sproughton hoe two-dimensionally, its purpose or function in life is entirely different. It is a three-way, two-plane garden tool and as such is novel in a conveyor belt era."

"I think it has made a considerable contribution to garden efficiency and has made good gardening within the reach of Mr Everyman. Also, one should remember that to hoe is not to swoe."

Plagiarism - the last chance

SIR: On a number of occasions in your columns you have discussed aspects of the law relating to the protection of industrial design, and in my view DESIGN has tackled this problem in the face of a great deal of apathy, even from those who appear to have suffered most from plagiarism. This results not so much, I think, from disinterest as a lack of confidence in (a) what can be done to protect industrial design under a workable law and (b) a feeling of desperation in making the responsible authority aware that the United Kingdom is one of the nations that does not recognise artistic merit to be an essential component of industrial design requiring the law's protection.

I refuse to believe that the securing of better pro-

tection under a workable law or laws is beyond the wit of man - but the present committee set up by the Board of Trade to hear evidence as to the requirements of industry (DESIGN 128/65) may be forgiven for making no substantial recommendations if designers, industrialists and all interested parties do not actively discuss the question and make sure that the present opportunity to present evidence is not lost. It may be our last chance for years to come.

J. W. NOEL JORDAN
Ernest Race Ltd
22 Union Road
Clapham
SW4

EDITOR: Manufacturers or designers wishing to submit suggestions or give evidence to the Board of Trade committee should write as soon as possible to the Joint Secretaries, The Designs Committee, Patent Office, 25 Southampton Building, WC2.

BOOKS

Introduction to twentieth century design

from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Arthur Drexler and Greta Daniel, Alec Tiranti Ltd, £1 4s
The Museum of Modern Art in New York is the only institution of its kind which includes design among its terms of reference. Its department of architecture and design not only promotes regular exhibitions of consumer goods but has also established a design collection to preserve important examples of "the arts of manufacture". Some of this material has now been published by the museum in a book called an *Introduction to Twentieth Century Design*.

In its *Good Design* exhibitions, held annually from 1950 - 55 the museum performed a valuable service for designers and manufacturers in presenting the best of their work to the public with a seal of merit from the



Kitchenware from the Museum's Useful Objects category.

most powerful arbiters of taste in the USA. It differs from The Design Centre in Britain in that it underlines historical aspects of design and it functions as a custodian of relics as well as a propaganda machine. The task of curatorship in this field has demanded a search for criteria; Arthur Drexler, director of the museum's department of architecture and design, discusses the postulates which have determined the collection in his introduction.

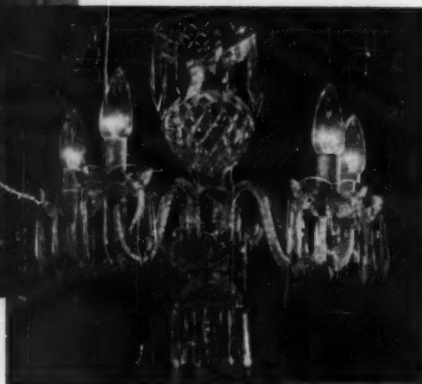
We are told that the criteria for selection of objects to

continued on page 75



Waterford Chandeliers installed in a private suite at the Mayfair Hotel.

Waterford Chandeliers



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be included in the permanent collection are *quality* and *historical significance*. "An object is chosen for its quality because it is thought to have achieved, or to have originated, those formal ideas of beauty which have become the major stylistic concepts of our time." "Significance... applies to objects not necessarily works of art but which nevertheless have contributed importantly to the development of design." Value, within these terms, is assessed by a committee of trustees of the museum (sprinkled with such illustrious names as Ford, Rockefeller and Guggenheim) from recommendations made by the staff of the design department.

Any short list of design masterpieces is bound to be inadequate. This one seems, at times, unduly biased. The earnest wish of the sponsors that the collection will provide a record of "the most beautiful artifacts of our time" may be fulfilled in respect of the 38 chairs included, but what about those light fittings? Of the six shown only one by Gerrit Rietveld has any beauty or



Knoll armchair, designed by Eero Saarinen.

historical significance, though certainly the other five endorse the catalogue note "the well designed individual lighting fixture remains a relatively rare object"; and I should have thought that the designs illustrated on page 77 are likely to prove less valuable to posterity than a page from Sears Roebuck. Shaky, too, is the taste which collects random-looking electrical control gear because it resembles a Jackson Pollock. The collection is very conscious of its art auspices and its foibles derive from this slant. The trustees are clearly susceptible to the cleaned-up craft approach—only about a third of the objects illustrated could be classed as industrial products. Arthur Drexler is fairly smug about this characteristic: he finds it easy to accept the fact that the definition "major stylistic concepts of our time" excludes, in practice, those styling concepts which have dominated consumer goods in "our time"; he is no less assured when, in announcing that "the collection, as yet, includes no television set, no refrigerator, no telephone and only a relatively few mechanical appliances",

he lays the blame on "commercial factors irrelevant, or even harmful, to aesthetic quality". Yet this can hardly explain the fact that *Twentieth Century Design* does not present a single example of production equipment—not one hand tool.

But it is from the conventionality of its attitudes that it acquires some strength; for the collection only scores heavily with the big guns: Aalto, Breuer, Mies, le Corbusier, Rietveld, Saarinen, Eames—a list which stems from the museum's predilection for functionalism and the conviction that "every one of the major innovations of modern furniture design has been the work of an architect". In aligning its taste with the Modern Movement in architecture it has, perforce, aligned itself with arts and crafts techniques. Drexler himself reveals the fly in the functional ointment when he points out that geometrical form and the precise finish of much Bauhaus design is the result of hand finishing in prototype workshops and that adjustment to mass production "usually deprived a design of just that kind of detail which had given the hand-made prototype its machine made look".

Drexler, throughout this short text, stands clear of the mass produced article—there is a tacit admission that consumer goods lie beyond the province of the craftsman designer. He seems embarrassed by the boycott, but so heartfelt is his withdrawal that he concludes with the first published statement I have seen of an attitude that could well become important for the next design era.

Briefly, his thesis is that consumer goods are now designed for comparatively short periods of usefulness—so short that aesthetic value is virtually inappropriate. Current production techniques require forced consumption, forced consumption is, in his opinion, often "anti-social". Responsibility for these social disorders is put squarely on the inhuman production systems which can only produce economically in large quantities. He suggests that the solution may be that the designer should take a hand in designing systems of greater flexibility—by recomposing the aesthetics of production rather than styling to the tune of consumption: "The designer's creative effort might shift away from static absolute values... towards the design of process—the machines themselves." It may be that the moralist will retreat to an ivory factory thus tackling his problem at the other end. In the design of machine tools and production systems the craft ethos can again predominate, functionalism can operate at its narrowest extremes: the philosopher-aesthete-engineer-designer may well find a place there, if that is where society needs him. Only, one wonders, what is the pay-off for the Museum of Modern Art? The most beautiful collection of blueprints from the second half of the century? **RICHARD HAMILTON**

Practical designs for built-in furniture

Arthur R. Brown, *Crosby Lockwood & Son, Ltd*, 18s

There are few books available dealing with this subject so that it is a pity that this one has dealt with built-in furniture in such a glib manner. More attention to details, both in proportion and illustration, is required. The author has covered too many pieces insufficiently well. It is not a cheap book and a few photographs would have greatly improved the publication. Whilst the list provided of specialist manufacturers was useful, I objected to the advertisements. My feeling is that the do-it-yourself enthusiasts would not be proud of the appearance of the finished products.

BERNARD MCGEOGHAN

Cover designer

This month's cover was designed by Ernest Hoch, who is a free-lance graphic and typographical designer. He studied chemistry at Vienna University before he turned



Ernest Hoch

to graphic art and design. He spent some years designing for London agencies before he established himself as a free-lance designer. He specialises in house styles, publicity design, technical and scientific literature, teaching charts, etc.

Addenda

DESIGN 130: The photograph on which the cover was based, and the photographs of Stirling Moss on pages 44 and 45 were by John Garner.

DESIGN 128/63: James Holland is vice-president of the Society of Industrial Artists, not F. H. K. Henrion.

DESIGN 127/24: The photograph of the Solartron ERA is the copyright of Data Processing.

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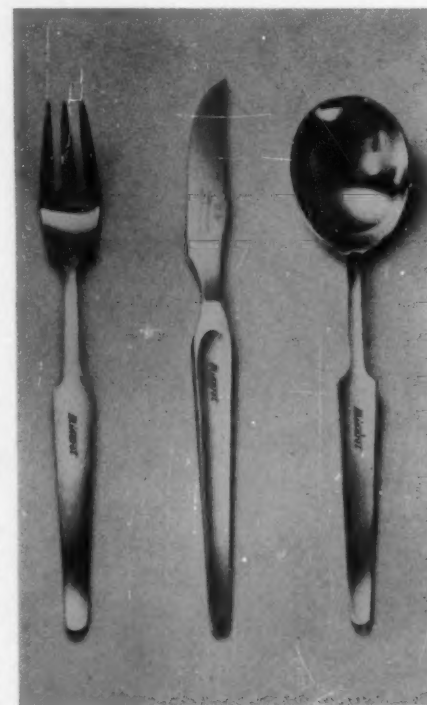
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